


TAFSEER AS-SA'DI



JUZ' 4-6

تفسير السجدي

تفسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير كلام المنان

'Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL



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جزء ٤-٦

Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

Translated by
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart



Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ — إ	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i>)	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell</i> , <i>rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap</i> , <i>mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing</i> , <i>maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam</i> , <i>ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	h
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> and <i>smooth</i>	dh






Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	ʿ
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word <i>Allah</i> , it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - ح	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و	long 'u', as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i>	y
ي	long 'e', as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : <i>bu'er</i> , or the stop sound in <i>uh-oh!</i>	(omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أَوْ، وَاوْ	long 'o', as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw
أَيَّ، يَايْ	long 'a', as in <i>aid</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
 fathah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
 kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
 dammah	shorter version of oo	u
 shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	double letter
 sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	absence of vowel



Arabic honorific symbols



(ﷲ)	<i>Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ</i>	The Exalted
(ﷺ)	<i>şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i>	Blessings and peace be upon him
(ﷺ)	<i>'alayhi as-salâm</i>	May peace be upon him
(ﷻ)	<i>raḍiya Allâhu 'anhu</i>	May Allah be pleased with him
(ﷻ)	<i>raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with her
(﷼)	<i>raḍiya Allâhu 'anhumâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with both of them
(﷽)	<i>raḍiya Allâhu 'anhum</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them
(﷾)	<i>raḍiya Allâhu 'anhunna</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only)



Hadith grade terms



Sound: *ṣaḥeeḥ*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it



03. Soorat Âl 'Imrân

(continued)



﴿لَنْ نَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا نَحِبُّ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (٩٢)

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٢)

3:92. You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love; and whatever you give [in charity], verily Allah knows it well.¹

Here Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He) encourages His slaves to spend on good causes, and says: ﴿You will never attain righteousness﴾ that is, you will never reach the level of righteousness which leads to paradise, ﴿until you spend [in charity] of that which you love﴾ that is, your precious wealth that you love. If you give precedence to the love of Allah over the love of wealth, and you spend it in ways that please Him, this will prove your sincere faith, the righteousness of your hearts and the genuineness of your piety. That includes spending what is precious of your wealth, spending when the giver is in need of what he gives, and spending when one is healthy. The verse indicates that

¹ The meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book (with some minor changes to the punctuation) have been translated by the translator. (Editor)

the individual will attain righteousness according to his spending of that which he loves, and that he will be lacking according to what is lacking in his spending. Because spending in any way brings reward, whether the amount is small or great, and whether it is something he loves or not, and the words: «You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love» may give the impression that spending anything other than what is mentioned will be of no benefit, Allah dispelled this notion by saying: «and whatever you give [in charity], verily Allah knows it well», so do not be hard on yourselves, for He will reward you according to your intentions and the extent to which (your charity) benefits others.



﴿ كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَءِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ ۚ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴾ (٩٣) فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٩٣-٩٥)

- 3:93. All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel [Ya'qoob] made unlawful for himself, before the Torah was revealed. Say: Bring the Torah and read it, if you are telling the truth.
- 3:94. Those who persist in fabricating lies and attributing them to Allah after this are indeed the wrongdoers.
- 3:95. Say: Allah has spoken the Truth. Follow the religion of Ibrâheem, the monotheist, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.

This is a refutation of the Jews' false claim that abrogation was not permissible, as a result of which they disbelieved in 'Eesâ ('alayhi

as-salâm – peace be upon him) and Muhammad (*ṣalla Allâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him) because they brought some rulings that differed from the rulings of the Torah concerning what is permissible and what is forbidden. By way of being completely fair in argument, and to make them quote from their own Book, the Torah, in order to prove that all types of food were permissible to the Children of Israel, Allah said: ﴿All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel﴾ meaning Ya‘qoob (ﷺ) ﴿made unlawful for himself﴾ that is, without any prohibition from Allah (ﷻ); rather he forbade it to himself because he suffered from sciatica, so he vowed that if Allah (ﷻ) healed him, he would forbid to himself the most beloved of food to him. According to their sources, he forbade to himself the meat and milk of camels, and they followed him in that; this happened before the Torah was revealed. Then it was revealed in the Torah things that were forbidden other than what Israel (Ya‘qoob) had forbidden, of foods that had previously been permissible to them, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We forbade to them certain good things that had [previously] been permitted to them...﴾ (*an-Nisâ’ 4: 160*)

Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) that if they denied that, he was to tell them to bring the Torah, yet they persisted in wrongdoing and stubbornness after that. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Those who persist in fabricating lies and attributing them to Allah after this are indeed the wrongdoers﴾. What wrongdoing can be greater than the wrongdoing of one who is called to let his scripture judge, but he refuses to do that out of stubbornness and arrogance? This is among the greatest evidence of the soundness of the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and that there are many clear signs of his truthfulness and the truthfulness of the One Who told him of various matters that he could not have known unless his Lord had told him of them. Hence Allah says:

«Say: Allah has spoken the Truth» that is, in what He has told you and in what He has ruled. This is a command from Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ) and those who follow him that they should say out loud: “Allah has spoken the truth”, believing that in their hearts on the basis of certain evidence, and so as to establish this testimony against those who deny it. Thus we know that the people who have the most faith and belief in Allah are those who have the most knowledge and understanding of the proof and evidence in detail, based on reports or reason. Then He instructed them to follow the religion of their father Ibrâheem (عليه السلام), that was based on affirmation of the oneness of Allah and abandoning polytheism; this is the basis of happiness, and abandoning it will result in doom and misery. This indicates that the Jews and others, who are not following the religion of Ibrâheem (عليه السلام), are polytheists, not monotheists.

When Allah commanded them to follow the religion of Ibrâheem in affirming the oneness of Allah and giving up polytheism, He commanded them to follow him in venerating His Sacred House by performing pilgrimage to it and otherwise, as He said:



﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٩٦-٩٧)

- 3:96. The first House [of worship] to be established for humanity was that at Bakkah [Makkah], full of blessings and guidance for the worlds.
- 3:97. In it are clear signs, [such as] the Station of Ibrâheem; whoever enters it will be safe. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by all who can afford the journey; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah has no need of the worlds.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the high status of this sacred House and that it was the first House (of worship) that Allah established for people, where they could focus on worshipping their Lord, and thus their sins would be forgiven, they would draw close to Allah, and by virtue of (this House) they would do many acts of worship and good deeds to attain the pleasure of their Lord, earn His reward and be saved from His punishment. Hence Allah says:

﴿full of blessings﴾ that is, in it there is a great deal of blessing and spiritual and worldly benefits, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿So that they may avail themselves of benefits and mention the name of Allah [at the time of sacrifice], during the appointed days, over the livestock that He has provided for them...﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 28)

﴿and guidance for the worlds﴾. Guidance is of two types: guidance in knowledge and guidance in deeds. Guidance in deeds is visible; it includes what Allah has ordained in it (the Ḥaram) of various acts of worship that are unique to this place. Guidance in knowledge refers to what a person acquires, by means of this place, of knowledge of the truth, as there are clear signs therein that Allah (ﷻ) has mentioned in the following verse:

﴿In it are clear signs﴾ that is, clear evidence and definitive proof for various kinds of divinely revealed knowledge and sublime aims, such as evidence of His oneness, mercy, wisdom, greatness, majesty, the perfect nature of His knowledge, and the vastness of His bounty and what He has bestowed upon His close friends and Prophets. One of these signs is ﴿the Station of Ibrâheem﴾. It may be that what is meant here is the well-known *Maqâm*² (Station), which is the rock on which Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) stood in order to build the Kaaba when the structure

² Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text. The term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)

had grown tall. It was formerly attached to the wall of the Kaaba, then when 'Umar (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) was caliph, he put it in the place where it is now. It was also said that the sign in it is the traces of Ibrâheem's feet, which left a mark on the rock; that mark remained until the early period of this Ummah, and this is something extraordinary. It was also said that the sign in it is the high esteem for it that Allah has instilled in people's hearts, so they venerate, honour and respect it. It may be that what is meant by the Station of Ibrâheem is the various locations in which he stood for the rituals of Hajj. Thus it may mean that all the parts of Hajj are clear signs, such as *ṭawâf* (circumambulation of the Kaaba), *sa'iy* (going back and forth between Şafâ and Marwah), as well as its locations, standing in 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, and the stoning of the *jamarât*, and all the rituals of Hajj. The sign in this case is what Allah has instilled in people's hearts of veneration and respect for these places and rituals, and their readiness to make the effort and spend the best of their wealth in order to reach these places, and putting up with all kinds of difficulty for that purpose, as well as what there is in those rituals and places of great wisdom and sublime meanings, and what there may be in those actions of wisdom and benefits, some of which are beyond people's comprehension. Another of the great signs in this place is that whoever enters it will be safe, protected by Sharia, as is Allah's will. With regard to *shar'î* protection, Allah and His Messenger Ibrâheem (ﷺ), then His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), ordained that the place should be respected and that whoever enters it should be granted safety and not be disturbed. This protection even includes the game animals, trees and plants (in the Ḥaram). This verse is quoted as evidence by those scholars who said that any person who commits an offence outside the Ḥaram then seeks sanctuary in the Ḥaram is to be granted safety and no *ḥadd* punishment is to be carried out on him unless he goes out of the Ḥaram. As for being granted safety according to Allah's will, that is because Allah (ﷻ),

by His will and decree, has instilled in people's hearts – even in the hearts of the polytheists who associate others with Him and those who disbelieve in their Lord – veneration and respect for this place, to the extent that one of them, despite all their strong tribal feelings and lack of patience in putting up with any wrongdoing done to him, may find his father's killer in the Ḥaram and not disturb him. Part of it being made a sanctuary is that if anyone intends to do harm to it, Allah will inevitably punish him in this world, as happened to the army of the elephant and others.



﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَآبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَآبِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ مَن ءَامَنَ تَبِعُونَهَا ءَوْجًا وَٱنتُمْ شَٰهِدَآءُ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍۭ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا ٱلْكِتَآبَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَٰنِكُمْ كَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَٱنتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَٰتُ ٱللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُۥ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍۭ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٩٨-١٠١)

- 3:98. Say: O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, when Allah is witness to all that you do?
- 3:99. Say: O People of the Book, why do you bar from Allah's way those who believe, seeking to make it [seem] crooked when you yourselves are witnesses [to its truth]? But Allah is not unaware of all that you do.
- 3:100. O you who believe, if you obey some of those who were given the scripture, they will turn you into disbelievers after your having believed.

3:101. How can you disbelieve, when Allah's revelations are being recited to you and His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds fast to Allah is indeed guided to a straight path.

Here Allah rebukes the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, for their rejection of the revelations of Allah that He sent down to His Messengers and made as a mercy to His slaves, by means of which they are guided to Him and by means of which they will be guided to all sublime aims and beneficial knowledge. These disbelievers combine disbelief in the revelations with barring those who believe in Allah from following them, and distorting and twisting the intended meaning, when they bear witness to its truth, knowing that what they have done is the greatest act of disbelief that would incur punishment. ﴿For those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah, We will add punishment to their punishment because they used to spread mischief.﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 88)

Hence Allah warns them here: ﴿But Allah is not unaware of all that you do﴾; rather He is aware of your deeds, your intentions and your evil plot, and He will requite you for it with the worst of punishments. As He warned and rebuked them, He followed that with mention of His mercy, generosity and kindness, and warned His believing slaves lest a plot be hatched against them without them realising, as He said:

﴿O you who believe, if you obey some of those who were given the scripture, they will turn you into disbelievers after your having believed﴾ – that is because of their envy and resentment towards you, and their eagerness to turn you away from your religion, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of the envy they have in their hearts, after the truth has become clear to them...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 109)

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the main reason and most significant factor that should make the believers steadfast, so that their certainty will not be shaken, and He states that this is something that is very unlikely:

«How can you disbelieve, when Allah's revelations are being recited to you and His Messenger is in your midst?» That is, the Messenger (ﷺ) is among you, reciting to you the verses of your Lord all the time; these are clear revelations which make one certain of the meaning and what they refer to, and not have any doubt about that content in any way, especially when the one who is explaining them is the best of humankind, the most knowledgeable, the most eloquent, the most sincere and the most compassionate towards the believers, and he is eager for people to be guided by all possible means; blessings and peace of Allah be upon him. He conveyed the message sincerely and clearly, and he did not leave any room for anyone to need to ask further questions or to seek further. Then Allah tells us that the one who holds fast to Him, puts his trust in Him, seeks protection by virtue of His strength and mercy from all evils and seeks His help in attaining all that is good, «is indeed guided to a straight path» that will bring him to his ultimate goal, because he is combining following the Messenger (ﷺ) in word and deed with holding fast to Allah.



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

- 3:102. O you who believe, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.
- 3:103. And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you, for you were enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren, and you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be guided.

This is a command from Allah to His believing slaves, that they should fear Him as He should be feared and persist in that, remaining steadfast and adhering to it until death. The one who persists in something will die adhering to it. If a person persists in fearing his Lord, obeying Him and turning to Him all the time when he is healthy, energetic and able, Allah will make him steadfast at the time of death and bless him with a good end. Fearing Allah as He should be feared – as Ibn Mas'ood said – means that He is to be obeyed and not disobeyed, remembered and not forgotten, shown gratitude and not ingratitude. This verse explains what Allah (ﷻ) deserves of fear of Him. As for what is required of people in that regard, it is as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So fear Allah as best you can...﴾ (at-Taghābun 64: 16)

The details of fearing Allah in terms of what is in the heart and actions that one should take are very many; fearing Allah means doing what Allah has enjoined and refraining from everything that Allah has forbidden.

Then Allah (ﷻ) instructed them to do that which will help them to attain fear of Him, which is to be united and adhere to the religion of Allah. The fact that the believers' call is one should unite them in harmony, because if the Muslims are united in their religion and their hearts are in harmony with one another, that will help to make

their religious affairs sound and worldly affairs in good shape. By uniting, they will be able to tackle any matter and achieve innumerable interests that depend on unity, such as cooperating in righteousness and piety, and other matters; by the same token, division and enmity undermine their well-being, sever the bonds between them and lead to everyone striving for his own self-interests, even if that leads to harm on a community level.

Then Allah (ﷻ) reminds them of His blessings and instructs them to remember them:

﴿Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you, for you were enemies﴾ killing one another and taking one another's wealth, to such an extent that the members of one tribe would fight and oppose one another, and there would be enmity and fighting among the people of one city. Their situation was one of grievous trouble; this was the situation of the Arabs before the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent. When Allah sent him and they believed in him, united in Islam and joined together in faith, they became like one person because of the harmony and bonds of friendship between them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿then He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren, and you were on the brink of the pit of fire﴾ that is, you deserved to enter the fire, and there was nothing standing between you and it except death, after which you would enter it

﴿and He saved you from it﴾ by means of what He blessed you with of belief in Muhammad (ﷺ).

﴿Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you﴾ that is, He explains and clarifies them, and distinguishes for you truth from falsehood, guidance from misguidance

﴿so that you may be guided﴾ by knowing the truth and acting upon it. This verse indicates that Allah loves His slaves to remember His blessing in their hearts and verbally, so that they may increase in gratitude towards Him and love for Him, and so that He will give them more of His bounty and blessings. The greatest of what one

may remember of His blessings is the blessing of guidance to Islam, following the Messenger (ﷺ) and unity among the Muslims.



﴿وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (١٠٤) وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٤-١٠٥)

- 3:104. Let there arise from among you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones who will be successful.
- 3:105. Do not be like those who became divided and fell into disputes after the clear proofs had come unto them; for them there will be a grievous punishment.

That is, let there be among you, O believers whom Allah has blessed with faith and holding fast to His rope, ﴿a group of people inviting to all that is good﴾. Good (*khayr*) is a comprehensive word that includes everything that brings one closer to Allah and further away from His wrath ﴿enjoining what is right﴾ that is, everything that is known to be good by means of rational or shar'i proof ﴿and forbidding what is wrong﴾ that is, everything that is known to be evil by means of rational or shar'i proof. This is an instruction from Allah to the believers, that among them there should be a group that takes on the task of calling people to His way and explaining His religion to people. That includes the scholars who teach religion; the preachers who call the people of other religions to enter Islam and call those who have gone astray to mend their ways; the *mujāhideen* who strive in jihad for the sake of Allah; those who have the task of checking on people and making them adhere to the rulings of Islam

such as the five daily prayers, *zakâh*, fasting, Hajj and so on; and those who check on weights and measures, and check on the traders in the marketplace, preventing them from cheating or engaging in invalid transactions. All of these matters come under the heading of communal obligations, as is indicated in this verse, in which it says, «Let there arise from among you a group of people». In other words, let there be among you a group of people who achieve the purpose behind the things mentioned. It is well established that when something is enjoined, it refers to that thing and whatever means are necessary to achieve it. Whatever these matters depend on is also enjoined, such as preparing for jihad by making ready all kinds of equipment by means of which the goal of defeating enemies and making the word of Islam supreme may be attained; acquiring knowledge with which to call people to what is good and developing means of achieving that; building schools to teach knowledge; helping the authorities in implementing the laws of Sharia among the people in word and deed, and with financial support; and other matters on which these aims depend. This group that is prepared to call people to what is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, is the elite of the believers. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says concerning them: «They are the ones who will be successful»; they will attain what they are seeking (paradise) and be saved from what they fear (hell).

Then Allah forbids being like the People of the Book in terms of division and disputes:

«Do not be like those who became divided and fell into disputes». What is astounding is that their disputes came «after the clear proofs had come unto them», that should have led to them not being divided. It was more expected of them than others that they would adhere to the religion, but what happened was the opposite, even though they were aware that they were going against the command of Allah. Thus they deserved the severe punishment; hence Allah (ﷻ) said: «for them there will be a grievous punishment».



﴿يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٦-١٠٨)

- 3:106. On the day when some faces will become bright, and some faces will become dark, to those whose faces will become dark, [it will be said]: Did you disbelieve after having believed? Taste then the punishment for having disbelieved.
- 3:107. But those whose faces become bright, they will be in Allah's mercy [paradise], to abide therein forever.
- 3:108. These are the revelations of Allah; We recite them to you in Truth: And Allah does not intend any injustice to [any of] His creation.

Here Allah tells us about the Day of Resurrection and the outcome of recompense on the basis of justice and grace on that day. This includes both promises and warnings that instil hope and fear.

﴿On the day when some faces will become bright﴾ – these are the faces of the good people who are blessed, the people who were united in holding fast to the rope of Allah.

﴿and some faces will become dark﴾ – these are the faces of the evil people who are doomed, those who were divided and who differed among themselves. Their faces will become dark because of the disgrace, humiliation and shame in their hearts; the faces of the blessed will become bright because of the joy, happiness, blessing and contentment in their hearts, the effects of which will appear on their faces, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and will bestow upon them radiance and joy.﴾ (al-Insân 76: 11)

The radiance will be on their faces and the joy will be in their hearts. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿As for those who earn evil, the recompense of an evil deed will be the like thereof, and shame will cover them. They will have no protector from [the wrath of] Allah. Their faces will be covered, as it were, with patches of darkest night. They will be inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 27)

﴿to those whose faces will become dark﴾ it will be said to them by way of rebuke and reprimanding: ﴿Did you disbelieve after having believed?﴾ that is, how could you prefer disbelief and misguidance over faith and guidance? How could you forsake the path of guidance and follow the path of misguidance?

﴿Taste then the punishment for having disbelieved﴾ for nothing is befitting for you except the fire and you deserve nothing but disgrace and shame.

﴿But those whose faces become bright﴾ will have the most perfect joy and they will be given the greatest glad tidings. They will be given the glad tidings of admittance to paradise and the pleasure and mercy of their Lord.

﴿they will be in Allah's mercy [paradise], to abide therein forever﴾. Because they will abide in His mercy forever, paradise is part of His mercy; they will abide therein forever, enjoying all that it contains of eternal delights and a life of ease in the vicinity of the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

When Allah explained to His Messenger (ﷺ) the rulings and requitals, He said: ﴿These are the revelations of Allah; We recite them to you﴾ that is, We tell them to you ﴿in Truth﴾ because His commands and prohibitions are based on wisdom and mercy, and the reward and punishment are likewise based on wisdom, mercy and justice that is free of any injustice. Hence He said ﴿And Allah does not intend any injustice to [any of] His creation﴾. He told us that He does not intend to be unjust towards them, let alone act on the basis

of injustice, so He will not detract from the reward for good deeds of anyone or increase the wrongdoing of the wrongdoers; rather He will requite them for their deeds only.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(١٠٩)

3:109. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; it is to Allah that all things will return.

That is, He is the Sovereign of everything in the heavens and on earth; He created them and granted them provision, and He controls them in accordance with His will and decree and in what He prescribes and enjoins upon them. They will return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, and He will requite them for their deeds, both good and bad.



﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ (١١٠) لَنْ يَضُرُّكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى ۖ وَإِنْ يُقْتَلُوا يَكُونُكُمْ الْأَذْبَارُ ثُمَّ لَا يُصْرَفُونَ﴾ (١١١) ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَيْنَ مَا تُقِفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَآءُ وَبَغَضٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٠-١١٢)

(١١٢) ﴿﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٠-١١٢)

- 3:110. You are the best community ever brought forth for [the benefit of] humankind; you enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil, and you believe in Allah. If only the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are some who do believe, but most of them are evildoers.
- 3:111. They will do you no harm, except with abusive words. If they come out to fight you, they will turn and flee, then they will not be helped.
- 3:112. They are struck with humiliation wherever they may be, except when under a covenant [of protection] from Allah or a covenant [of protection] from the people. They have incurred Allah's wrath, and wretchedness is decreed for them. This is because they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah, and killed the Prophets unjustly. That was because of their disobedience and transgression.

Here Allah (ﷻ) praises this Ummah and states that it is the best of communities that Allah has ever brought forth for (the benefit of) humanity, because they perfected themselves by having faith, which requires them to do everything that He enjoined and to strive in perfecting others by enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. That includes calling the people to Allah, striving for that purpose and doing their utmost to turn people away from their misguidance, transgression and sin. By doing that, they (the Muslims) become the best community ever brought forth for (the benefit of) humanity. In a previous verse (3: 104), Allah (ﷻ) said: «Let there arise from among you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong». This is a command from Allah to this Ummah, and when there is a command, the one who is commanded may or may not do it. But in this verse (3: 110) Allah states that the Ummah has carried out what Allah instructed it to do and obeyed the command of its Lord; thus it deserves to be favoured above all other nations or communities.

﴿If only the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them﴾. This is a kind of calling them in a gentle manner that should cause them to respond to the call, but only a few of them believed; most of them are evildoers who disobeyed Allah and showed all kinds of enmity towards the close friends of Allah. But by the grace of Allah towards His believing slaves, He caused their plots to backfire, so they will not harm the believers in terms of their religious commitment or physical well-being. Rather the worst of their harm is no more than verbal annoyance which is inevitable on the part of every opponent. But if they fight the believers, they will turn and flee, then their defeat will be ongoing; they will continue to be humiliated and they will not be helped at any time. Hence Allah says that He has punished them with inward humiliation and outward wretchedness, and they will never feel settled or at peace.

﴿except when under a covenant [of protection] from Allah or a covenant [of protection] from the people﴾. The Jews will only either be under Muslim rule, paying *jizyah* according to the covenant, or they will be under Christian rule.

﴿They have incurred Allah's wrath﴾ in addition to that, and this is the worst punishment. Allah tells us why they have ended up in this situation, as He says:

﴿This is because they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah﴾ that Allah sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), that should have led to certainty and faith, but they disbelieved in them out of resentment and stubbornness

﴿and killed the Prophets unjustly﴾ that is, they responded to the Prophets of Allah, who showed them the greatest kindness, in the most evil of ways, by killing them. After such an audacious crime, could there be anything worse than that? All of this came about because of their disobedience and enmity, which is what gave them the audacity to disbelieve in Allah and kill the Prophets of Allah.



﴿لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ
يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٣-١١٥)

- 3:113. Not all of them are alike. Among the People of the Book are some who are upright; they recite the revelations of Allah [in prayer] during the night, and they prostrate.
- 3:114. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil; and they hasten to do good deeds. They are among the righteous.
- 3:115. Whatever good they do, it will not go unappreciated; for Allah knows well those who are conscious of Him.

After having told us about the evildoers among the People of the Book, and their deeds and punishments, Allah then tells us about the upright group, and their deeds and rewards. He tells us that they are not alike in His sight, rather there is an indescribable difference between them. The evildoers are as described above, whereas these people are believers. Allah tells us that some of them ﴿are upright﴾ that is, they adhere to the religion of Allah and do that which Allah has commanded, which includes establishing prayer ﴿they recite the revelations of Allah [in prayer] during the night, and they prostrate﴾. This is a description of their prayer during the night, their lengthy *tahajjud*, their recitation of the Book of their Lord, their showing humility towards Him and their bowing and prostrating to Him.

﴿They believe in Allah and the Last Day﴾ that is, their faith is like that of the believers, which includes believing in every Prophet who was sent and every Book revealed by Allah. Belief in the Last Day

is singled out for mention because belief in the Last Day motivates the believer to do that which brings him closer to Allah and that will bring reward on that day, and to avoid anything for which he will be punished on that day.

﴿they enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil﴾ thus they strive to perfect themselves by means of faith and all that it entails, and they strive to perfect others by enjoining them to do all that is good and forbidding them to do anything that is evil. That includes encouraging their co-religionists and others to believe in Muhammad (ﷺ). Then Allah describes their lofty aspirations:

﴿and they hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, they rush to do them and seek every opportunity to do them at the earliest possible time. That is because of their great eagerness to do what is good, and their knowledge of the benefits and reward that goodness brings. These are the people to whom Allah ascribes these beautiful characteristics and good deeds.

﴿They are among the righteous﴾ whom Allah encompasses in His mercy and forgiveness, bestowing upon them His grace and bounty.

﴿Whatever good they do﴾, whether it is great or small
 ﴿it will not go unappreciated﴾ that is, they will never be deprived of its reward; rather Allah will reward them for it completely, but the reward for deeds depends on what is in the individual's heart of faith and piety. Hence Allah says: ﴿for Allah knows well those who are conscious of Him﴾, as He says elsewhere:

﴿... Verily, Allah only accepts from those who fear Him.﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 27)



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ

رِيحٌ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِن
 أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٦-١١٧)

- 3:116. As for those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their children will avail them at all against Allah; it is they who will be inhabitants of the fire, abiding therein forever.
- 3:117. The likeness of what they spend in this worldly life is that of a freezing wind that strikes the crops of people who have wronged themselves, destroying them. It is not Allah Who has wronged them, but they wronged themselves.

Here Allah tells us that in the case of those who disbelieve, their wealth and children will never avail them at all before Allah; they will not ward off from them anything of the punishment of Allah or bring them anything of the reward of Allah, as He says:

﴿It is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us; but those who believe and do righteous deeds...﴾ (Saba' 34: 37)

Rather their wealth and their children are a means that will take them to hell and serve as proof against them that Allah bestowed blessings upon them for which they should have been grateful, and they will be punished for not giving thanks and for disbelieving. Hence Allah says: ﴿it is they who will be inhabitants of the fire, abiding therein forever﴾.

Then Allah gives a likeness of what the disbelievers spend of their wealth in order to bar people from the path of Allah, seeking thereby to extinguish the light of Allah; their wealth will not achieve anything and it will diminish, like one who sows crops, hoping that they will be productive and hoping to harvest the yield, but whilst he is like that a freezing wind comes, one that is biting cold, and destroys his crops, leaving him with nothing but exhaustion and sorrow. Similarly, these disbelievers, of whom Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The disbelievers spend their wealth to bar [people] from the path of Allah, and they will continue to spend it, then it will become a source of regret for them, then they will be defeated...» (al-Anfāl 8: 36)

«It is not Allah Who has wronged them» by cancelling out their deeds

«but they wronged themselves» when they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah, rejected His Messenger (ﷺ) and were eager to extinguish the light of Allah. These factors are what made their deeds come to nothing and took away their wealth.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأُولُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْأَيَّاتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَآأَنْتُمْ أَوْلَاءُ يُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُؤْتُوا يَغِيظُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾ إِنْ تَمَسَسْتُمْ حَسَنَةً تَسَوْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تَصِيرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٨-١٢٠)

3:118. O you who believe, do not take as your close friends those outside your ranks; they will spare no effort to cause you mischief; they wish to see you in distress. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made clear to you the revelations, if you understand.

3:119. O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures. When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are

alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you. Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.

- 3:120. If anything good happens to you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you; for Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to take close friends from among the hypocrites of the People of the Book and others, telling them of their secrets and what is in their hearts, or appointing them to do some work for the Muslim community. That is because they are enemies whose hearts are filled with hostility and hatred, thus it has appeared from their mouths.

﴿and what their hearts conceal is far worse﴾ than what you hear from them. Hence ﴿they will spare no effort to cause you mischief﴾ that is, they will do their utmost to cause you harm and distress, and they will do things to cause you trouble and help your enemies against you. Allah says to the believers:

﴿We have made clear to you the revelations﴾ that is, in which you will find that which is in your best interests in both religious and worldly terms

﴿if you understand﴾ and thus recognise these things and distinguish between friends and enemies. For not everyone should be taken as a close friend; rather the wise person is someone who, if he has no choice but to mix with the enemy, only mixes with him outwardly, and does not let him know anything about his inner thoughts, even if that person tries to be a friend and swears that he is his friend.

Allah says, urging the believers to be cautious of these hypocrites among the People of the Book, and explaining the extent of their enmity:

﴿O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures﴾ that is,

all the Books that Allah has revealed to His Prophets, whereas they do not believe in your Book; rather when they meet you they pretend to be believers:

«When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you».

«Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts» this is glad tidings for the believers: those who aim to harm you are only harming themselves and they cannot act upon their rage; they will continue to be troubled by it until they die and move from the punishment of this world to the punishment of the hereafter.

«If anything good happens to you», such as victory over the enemy, conquests and booty

«it grieves them» that is, it upsets them and causes them distress

«but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you; for Allah has full knowledge of all that they do». If you take the measures by means of which Allah has promised victory – namely steadfastness and fear of Him – their scheming will not harm you; rather Allah will cause their schemes to backfire, because He has complete knowledge and power over them. Hence they cannot escape from that and nothing is hidden from Him.



﴿وَإِذْ عَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقْعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾
هَمَّتْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيَهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٢١-١٢٢)

- 3:121. And [remember] when you set out from your home to post the believers at their stations for battle; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

3:122. And [remember] when two groups from among you were about to lose heart; but Allah was their protector, and in Allah let the believers put their trust.

These verses were revealed concerning the battle of Uḥud, the story of which is well known from books of *seerah* (Prophet's biography) and history. Perhaps the reason why the story of Uḥud is mentioned in this context, as is the story of Badr later on, is that Allah (ﷻ) had promised the believers that if they were steadfast and feared Him, He would grant them victory and foil the schemes of their enemies against them. This is a general principle and true promise that is never broken if the conditions are met. Examples of that are mentioned in these two stories. Allah supported the believers at Badr, when they were patient and feared Him, and He caused the enemy to gain the upper hand (at Uḥud) when they acted in a manner that showed that their fear of Allah had been undermined. One of the reasons why these two stories are mentioned together is that Allah loves His slaves, if something they dislike happens to them, to remember other things that happened to them that they do like; this will reduce the impact of the calamity and they will give thanks to Allah for the great blessing that, when compared to the calamity that has befallen them but is ultimately good for them, will make the calamity seem insignificant in comparison with those blessings. And Allah also refers to this wisdom in the verse: ﴿How is it that, when a calamity befell you whilst you had inflicted twice as much [on your enemy], you said: Where has this come from? Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves. Verily, Allah has power over all things.﴾ (3: 165).

To sum up the story of Uḥud: when the remnants of the polytheists went back from Badr to Makkah, which happened in 2 AH, they prepared all that they could of wealth, men and equipment, until they had collected enough to give some certainty that they would achieve their goal and exact vengeance. Then they headed from Makkah to

Madinah with three thousand fighters, and they halted near Madinah. The Prophet (ﷺ) came out to meet them, after consulting with his Companions (*radiya Allāhu 'anhum* – may Allah be pleased with all of them). He came out with one thousand men. After they had gone a short distance, the hypocrite 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy went back with one-third of the army whose thinking was akin to his. Two groups among the believers, Banu Salamah and Banu Hārithah, thought of turning back, but Allah made them steadfast. When they reached Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) stationed the Muslims with their back to Uḥud, then he placed fifty men in a gap in Mount Uḥud, and instructed them to stay put and not to move from that spot; their job was to make sure that no one could attack the Muslims from the rear. When the Muslims and the polytheists met in battle, the polytheists were initially defeated and they fled, leaving behind their camps, and the Muslims pursued them, killing some and taking others captive. When the archers whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had stationed in the gap in the mountain saw them, they said to one another: The booty, the booty! Why should we stay here when the polytheists have been defeated? Their commander, 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, warned them not to disobey orders, but they did not pay any attention to him. When they deserted their posts and only a few were left, including their commander 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, the cavalry of the polytheists came through that gap and attacked the Muslim rearguard from behind. The Muslims were thrown into panic, which was a very hard test for them and in which they were made to taste the punishment for their disobedience, and some of them were killed. Then they climbed up to the top of Mount Uḥud and Allah restrained the hands of the polytheists, who returned to their land, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) returned to Madinah.

﴿And [remember] when you set out from your home﴾ the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions set out after *Jumu'ah* prayer

﴿to post the believers at their stations for battle﴾ that is, you organised them and placed them in suitable positions. This is great praise for the Prophet (ﷺ), because he is the one who organised them and posted them in their battle stations; that was because of his perfect knowledge and skill, and his high aspirations and perfect courage, because he took care of these matters himself; blessings and peace of Allah be upon him.

﴿and Allah is All-Hearing﴾; He hears all sounds, including what the believers and hypocrites say, each of them speaking in accordance with what is in his heart

﴿All-Knowing﴾; He knows people's intentions, and requites them in full. Moreover, Allah hears you, knows all about you, and takes care of you; He controls your affairs and supports you. He said to Moosâ and Hâroon:

﴿Allah said: Fear not; verily I am with you both. I hear and see [everything].﴾ (Tâ Hâ 20: 46)

By His grace and kindness to them, when ﴿two groups from among﴾ the believers thought of giving up – namely Banu Salamah and Banu Hârithah, as stated above – Allah (ﷻ) made them steadfast as a favour to them and to the rest of the believers. Hence He said: ﴿but Allah was their protector﴾. That was by His grace towards His close friends; He guided them to that which was in their best interests and protected them from that which could have caused them harm. One aspect of His protection of them was that when they thought of committing this great sin, namely giving up and deserting the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), He protected them from doing so because of the faith they had. This is like the verse:

﴿Allah is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 257)

Then He said: ﴿and in Allah let the believers put their trust﴾. This is a command to put their trust in Allah, which means relying on Him to bring benefits and ward off harm, whilst trusting and having faith

in Allah. A person's trust in Allah will be commensurate with his faith, and the believers are more entitled to put their trust in Allah than anyone else, especially at times of hardship and fighting, because they have no choice but to put their trust in their Lord, to seek His help and support, to declare that they have no power or strength of their own and to depend on the power and strength of Allah. Thus He will support them and ward off calamities and trials from them.



﴿وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمِدِّدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِ ۖ وَمَا النَّصْرُ
إِلَّا مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٢٣-١٢٦)

- 3:123. Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were weak and few in number. So fear Allah, that you may be grateful.
- 3:124. [Remember] when you said to the believers: Does it not suffice you that Allah will help you with three thousand angels sent down?
- 3:125. Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you with five thousand angels clearly marked.
- 3:126. Allah ordained this only as glad tidings for you, and to reassure your hearts thereby; there is no victory except from Allah, the Almighty, the Most Wise.

This is a reminder to His believing slaves of how He helped them achieve victory on the day of Badr, when they were weak, few in

number and poorly equipped, in contrast to the great numbers and superior equipment of their enemy. The battle of Badr occurred in 2 AH. The Prophet (ﷺ) left Madinah with a little over three hundred of his Companions (رضي الله عنهم), and they had only seventy camels and two horses with them. They set out in pursuit of the caravan of Quraysh that had come from Syria. The polytheists heard of that, so they prepared the army to go from Makkah to protect their caravan; they set out with approximately one thousand well-equipped and fully armed fighters and plenty of horses. They and the Muslims met at a well called Badr, between Makkah and Madinah, where they fought. Allah granted a great victory to the Muslims, who killed seventy of the most prominent and courageous of the polytheists, as well as capturing seventy more and seizing control of their camp. We will discuss the story further in the commentary on Soorat al-Anfāl, in shā' Allāh, as that is the appropriate place to do so. However, Allah mentioned it here to remind the Muslims that they should fear their Lord and give thanks to Him. Hence He said: ﴿So fear Allah, that you may be grateful﴾, because the one who fears his Lord has given thanks to Him, and the one who does not fear his Lord has not given thanks to him.

﴿[Remember] when you said to the believers﴾ that is, remember, O Muhammad (ﷺ), when you said to the believers on the day of Badr, giving them the glad tidings of victory:

﴿Does it not suffice you that Allah will help you with three thousand angels sent down? Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you with five thousand angels clearly marked﴾ that is, they bear marks of courage. Allah stipulated three conditions for their support: steadfastness, fear of Allah and a sudden attack from the enemy. This was a promise to send down the angels mentioned and to support them by means of those angels. As for the promise of victory and foiling the enemy's schemes, Allah stipulated the first

two conditions for that, as we have seen previously in the verse: ﴿But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you﴾ (3: 120).

﴿Allah ordained this﴾ that is, His support of you with the angels ﴿only as glad tidings for you﴾ so that you might rejoice and your spirits be raised

﴿and to reassure your hearts thereby; there is no victory except from Allah﴾, so do not rely on what you have of the means of victory; rather the means of victory may give you some reassurance, but the true victory that cannot be overturned comes by the will of Allah; He grants victory to whomever He will of His slaves. If He wills, He grants victory to those who have the means of attaining victory and are better prepared, as is usually the case; but if He wills, He will grant victory to the weaker side, in order to highlight to His slaves that all matters are in His Hands and all matters go back to Him. Hence He said:

﴿from Allah, the Almighty﴾, so no created being can frustrate Him; rather all people are weak and under His control

﴿the Most Wise﴾ Who says and does what is appropriate at the right time and in the right place. By His wisdom He sometimes causes the disbelievers to prevail over the Muslims, but this is not ongoing. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...If Allah had so willed, He could have exacted retribution upon them [without you fighting], but He [commands you to fight] in order to test some of you by means of others...﴾ (Muhammad 47: 4)



﴿لَيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْتُمُهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا ظَآئِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

3:127. [Allah helped you] so that He might cut down a section of the disbelievers or disgrace them, so that they might retreat in utter disappointment.

Here Allah tells us that He gives His help to His believing slaves for either of two reasons, the first of which is to cut down a section or group of the disbelievers and their prominent figures, by causing them to be killed or captured, or a city to be taken over, or booty to be seized, thus strengthening the believers and humiliating the disbelievers. That is because the disbelievers' resistance to Islam and their fighting the Muslims are based on their individuals, weapons, wealth and land, by means of which they are able to resist and fight. Therefore cutting down any part of that reduces their strength. The second reason is that by means of their strength and numbers, the disbelievers have great hope of defeating the Muslims and are very keen to achieve that, so they do their utmost and spend their wealth to achieve it. Hence Allah helps the believers against them and sends them back disappointed, not having achieved their goal; rather they go back with loss, grief and sorrow. If you think about what happens in reality, you will see that Allah's help to His believing slaves is only ever one of these two things: either victory against the enemy or disgrace and retreat for them.



﴿لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ﴾ ۞ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَفُوٌّ رَّحِيمٌ

﴿سورة آل عمران: ١٢٨-١٢٩﴾

3:128. It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide whether He turn in mercy to them, or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers.

3:129. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

When the events of the day of Uḥud unfolded, and the Prophet (ﷺ) went through hardship, by means of which Allah raised him in status, and his head was injured and his front tooth broken, he said: «How can any people prosper who injured the head of their Prophet?» (Muslim)³

He started to pray against the leaders of the polytheists, such as Abu Sufyân ibn Ḥarb, Ṣafwân ibn Umayyah, Suhayl ibn 'Amr and al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm, but Allah sent down revelation to him, forbidding him to pray against them, invoke curses upon them and seek their expulsion from the mercy of Allah:

«It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide»; all you have to do is convey the message, teach the people and strive to do what is in their best interests. The matter is in the Hand of Allah (ﷻ), Who controls all things; He guides whomever He wills and He causes to go astray whomever He wills. So do not pray against them; rather their case is for your Lord to decide. If His wisdom and mercy dictate that He should show mercy to them and bless them with Islam, He will do that, and if His wisdom dictates that they should remain disbelievers and not be guided, in which case they are the ones who wronged and harmed themselves and brought it upon themselves, He will do that.

³ All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board as to whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is only because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

Allah turned in mercy to these specific individuals and others, and guided them to Islam, may Allah be pleased with them. This verse indicates that the will of Allah supersedes the will of people; that an individual, no matter how high his status, may choose one thing but what is best and serves a purpose is something other than that; it was not for the Messenger (ﷺ) to decide, so it is more appropriate to say this in the case of others. This is the greatest refutation of those who pin their hopes on Prophets, righteous people and others, and it highlights the fact that doing so is associating others with Allah in worship and is indicative of a lack of rational thinking, because they turn away from the One Who is in control of all things and turn to those who have no control at all, which is clearly misguidance. Think about how, when Allah mentions His turning to them in mercy, He attributes this action to Himself and does not refer to any measure on their part that could make them qualified for that. This indicates that this blessing is pure grace from Him to His slave, without any prior measure on the part of that person. But when He mentions the punishment, He also mentions their wrongdoing and connects the punishment to the fact that they were wrongdoers: ﴿or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers﴾. This is indicative of the perfect justice and wisdom of Allah, as He dictates punishment when appropriate, and He does not wrong His slaves; rather it is the slave who wrongs himself. When He stated that His Messenger (ﷺ) had nothing to do with the decision, He affirmed that the decision was His to make:

﴿To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ including the angels, human beings, *jinn*, animals, heavenly bodies and all inanimate things. Everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to Allah, and is created by Him and under His control. He directs them like slaves, and they have no control at all. As that is the case, they are recipients of either His forgiveness or His punishment; He forgives whomever He wills, by guiding him to Islam, forgiving his association of others with Him and blessing him by enabling him to give up sin, so that He will forgive him his sin.

﴿and punishes whomever He wills﴾ by leaving him to his own devices and his ignorant self that is inclined towards evil; thus he will do evil deeds and be punished for that. Then the verse ends with two names of Allah that are indicative of the vastness of His mercy and the comprehensive nature of His forgiveness, as He says: ﴿and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾. This offers the great glad tidings that His mercy prevails over His wrath, and His forgiveness prevails over His punishment. This verse tells us about the categories of people and that Allah forgives some of them and punishes others, but it does not end with one name that refers to mercy and another that refers to vengeance; rather it ends with two names, both of which refer to His mercy. He is possessed of mercy and kindness by virtue of which He will show mercy to His slaves such as has never entered the mind of any human being and cannot be described. We ask Him to bestow His mercy upon us and admit us to His paradise among His righteous slaves.



﴿يَتَابِعُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ ۖ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَنَظِيرِينَ الْفَيْضِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَجَسَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا الذُّنُوبَ بِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّةٌ تَجْرَىٰ مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٠-١٣٦)

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- 3:130. O you who believe! Do not devour usury, doubled and multiplied. Fear Allah, that you may prosper.
- 3:131. Guard yourselves against the fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers,
- 3:132. And obey Allah and the Messenger; that you may attain mercy.
- 3:133. Hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the pious,
- 3:134. Those who spend in times of both ease and hardship, who control their anger, and pardon people, for Allah loves those who do good;
- 3:135. And those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins – for who can forgive sins except Allah? – and do not knowingly persist in what they have done.
- 3:136. For such their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; how excellent a reward for those who work [and strive]!
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We have seen above, in the introduction to this *tafseer*, that each person should pay attention to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is bad to himself and to others, and that when Allah (ﷻ) issues a command, it becomes incumbent upon him – first of all – to understand when and how it is to be done, and what is enjoined upon him, so that he can fulfil the command. Once he understands that, he must strive and seek Allah's help to put it into practice himself and enjoin others to do so, as much as he is able. Similarly, if he is told not to do something, he must understand when and how this applies, and what it does and does not include, then he should strive hard, seeking the help of his Lord, to refrain from it. This is what he must do with regard to all the divine commands and prohibitions.

In these verses, Allah issues some commands and describes some good characteristics that He enjoins and urges us to attain, and tells us

of the reward of those who do these things. He also mentions some prohibitions and urges us to keep away from those things.

It may be – and Allah knows best – that the reason why these verses come in the context of the story of Uḥud is that Allah (ﷻ) had previously promised His believing slaves that, if they remained steadfast and feared Him, He would grant them victory over their enemies and He would weaken their enemies' resolve against them, as He said: ﴿But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you﴾ (3: 120) and ﴿Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you...﴾ (3: 125).

It is as if the listener would be keen to know what these qualities are that bring fear of Allah, by means of which victory, success and happiness may be attained. Hence in these verses Allah mentions the most important characteristics of fear of Him which, if a person attains them, he will be more likely to attain others.

This is proven by the fact that Allah mentions the word *taqwā* (meaning piety or fear of Him) three times in this passage, once in absolute terms (without mentioning Who or what is to be feared or to Whom piety is to be directed): ﴿which is prepared for the pious﴾ (3: 133); and twice in conjunction with mention of Who is to be feared or what is to be guarded against: ﴿Fear Allah﴾ (3: 130) and ﴿Guard yourselves against the fire﴾ (3: 131).

﴿O you who believe﴾ every time this phrase appears in the Qur'an, saying ﴿O you who believe﴾, do such and such or do not do such and such, it indicates that faith is the reason that makes one abide by these commands and avoid what is prohibited, because faith means believing in everything that one is required to believe in, which has an impact on one's deeds. Here Allah forbids them to devour usury, doubled and multiplied. This is what the people of the *jāhiliyah*, and those who did not care about the commands of Sharia, were used to,

namely that when debt became due from one who was in financial difficulty, they would say to him: Either pay what you owe us, or we will extend the deadline and increase what you owe. The poor man would be forced to accept this condition in order to get the lender off his back, trying to find temporary relief from this trouble, but it increased what he owed, doubled and multiplied, without any benefit to him.

The words ﴿doubled and multiplied﴾ highlight the harshness and abhorrent nature of this condition, and point to the wisdom behind the prohibition thereof. Allah forbade usury because of the injustice it involves; Allah instructs the lender to give respite to the one who is in difficulty and leave the amount owed as it is, without increasing it. Forcing the borrower to pay more than he owes is multiple wrongdoing, which the pious believer must refrain from and not go near it, because forsaking it is one of the requirements of piety or fear of Allah.

Success depends on piety or fear of Allah, therefore He said: ﴿Fear Allah, that you may prosper. Guard yourselves against the fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers﴾ by giving up that which leads to entering it, namely disbelief and sins of varying degrees. All sins – especially major sins – lead to disbelief; in fact they are among the characteristics of disbelief. Allah has prepared the fire for those who do these things, therefore giving up sin will save one from the fire and protect one from the wrath of Allah. Doing good deeds and acts of obedience lead to attaining the pleasure of the Most Merciful, entering paradise and attaining mercy. Therefore Allah says:

﴿And obey Allah and the Messenger﴾ by doing what He commands and avoiding what He forbids
 ﴿that you may attain mercy﴾; obeying Allah and obeying His Messenger (ﷺ) are means of attaining mercy, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...My mercy encompasses all things; I shall ordain it for those who fear Me, and give zakâh...﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 156)

Then Allah commanded them to hasten towards His forgiveness and His paradise, as vast as the heavens and the earth, which Allah has prepared for the pious who fear Him, for they are its people and acts of piety are what bring one to it.

Then He describes the pious and their deeds:

﴿Those who spend in times of both ease and hardship﴾ that is, at times of difficulty or ease. When things are easy, they spend a great deal and when things are hard they do not think of any deed of kindness as being too little.

﴿who control their anger﴾ that is, if someone else harms them in a way that makes them angry – which refers to the heart being filled with rage and the desire to take revenge in word and deed – they do not act in accordance with human nature; rather they suppress the anger in their hearts and show patience in refraining from treating the offender in the same manner.

﴿and pardon people﴾ – pardoning people includes pardoning everyone who mistreats you in word or deed. Pardon is superior to suppressing anger because pardon means not holding it against the one who mistreated you and forgiving the offender. This can only come from one who has attained praiseworthy characteristics and has given up bad characteristics, and who is thinking of the reward of Allah, so he forgives the slaves of Allah out of compassion and kindness towards them, because he does not want to hurt them, and so that Allah will forgive him and his reward will be with his generous Lord, not with His helpless slave, as Allah says:

﴿...but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah...﴾ (ash-Shoorâ 42: 40)

Then Allah tells us about a quality that is more comprehensive, better and more sublime, which is doing good (*ihsân*):

﴿for Allah loves those who do good﴾. Doing good refers to two things: doing well in worshipping the Creator and doing good to other people. The Prophet (ﷺ) described doing well in worshipping the Creator as: «...worshipping Allah as if you can see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.» (Muslim)

Doing good to other people means trying to help or benefit them in both spiritual and worldly terms, and warding off harm from them in both spiritual and worldly terms. That includes enjoining them to do good and forbidding them to do bad, teaching those who are ignorant, admonishing those who are heedless, offering sincere advice to the common folk and prominent figures, striving to bring them together, giving them charity, and spending on them in ways that are obligatory or encouraged, according to their situation and needs.

That includes being generous and helpful, refraining from annoying them, and putting up with their annoyance, as Allah described the pious in these verses. Whoever does these things has done his duty towards Allah and towards His slaves.

Then Allah tells us how they apologise to their Lord for their sins: ﴿And those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves﴾ that is, if they do bad deeds, whether they are major sins or of a lesser degree, they hasten to repent and seek forgiveness, and they remember their Lord and His warning to those who are disobedient and His promise to those who fear Him. So they ask for forgiveness for their sins and concealment for their faults; at the same time, they give up their sins and regret them. Hence Allah says: ﴿and [they] do not knowingly persist in what they have done﴾.

﴿For such﴾ that is, for those who are described in these terms ﴿their reward is forgiveness from their Lord﴾ that removes the burden of sin that forms an impediment to reaching paradise ﴿and gardens through which rivers flow﴾ in which there is eternal blessing, delight, happiness, well-being, goodness, happiness, palaces,

lofty and elegant dwellings, beautiful and fruitful trees, and rivers flowing through that splendid abode.

﴿to abide therein forever﴾ – they will never leave it; they will never want anything else and its delights will never change.

﴿how excellent a reward for those who work [and strive]﴾. They strove a little for the sake of Allah and were rewarded with much. Those who push themselves to travel by night will, in the morning, be glad that they made that effort, and at the time of reward, the one who strove hard will find his reward paid in full.

These verses are among the texts quoted by *ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah* as evidence that deeds are part of faith, which is unlike the view of the Murjites.

To prove this, we quote the following verse from Soorat al-Hadeed, which is akin to this passage in Âl 'Imrân:

﴿Race towards forgiveness from your Lord and paradise which is as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers...﴾ (al-Hadeed 57: 21)

The verse in Soorat al-Hadeed only refers to believing in Allah and His Messengers, and the verse here in Soorat Âl 'Imrân (3: 133) says that paradise is prepared for the pious.

Then Allah describes the pious in terms of financial and physical actions, which indicates that these pious people who are described in these terms are the same as those who are mentioned in Soorat al-Hadeed as believers (in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ).



﴿قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ﴾

﴿هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٧ - ١٣٨)

3:137. There were many nations before you; travel through the earth, and see what was the fate of those who disbelieved.

3:138. This is a clarification for all humankind, a guidance and admonition to those who fear Allah.

In these verses and those that follow them, discussing the story of Uḥud, Allah (ﷻ) offered consolation to His believing slaves and told them that there had been many nations before them who were tested, and Allah tried the believers among them by causing them to fight the disbelievers, and the struggle continued with no decisive outcome until Allah decreed that the ultimate victory should be for His pious, believing slaves, and in the end the disbelievers were defeated; Allah humiliated them by granting victory to His Messengers and their followers.

﴿travel through the earth﴾ that is, travel physically and contemplate ﴿and see what was the fate of those who disbelieved﴾ for you will not find that there was any other outcome for them but all kinds of worldly punishments. Their habitations are empty, and the loss of their power and sovereignty, and the disappearance of their extravagance and pride, are clear to everyone. Is this not the greatest proof for the truth of what the Messengers brought?

The divine wisdom behind the trials that Allah sends to His slaves is to distinguish those who are sincere from those who are lying. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿This is a clarification for all humankind﴾ that is, a clear explanation that shows people truth from falsehood, those who are blessed from those who are doomed. This refers to those whom Allah punishes.

﴿a guidance and admonition to those who fear Allah﴾ because they are the ones who benefit from the revelation, which guides them to the straight path, and admonishes them and deters them from following the path of misguidance. As for other people, it is a clarification for

them by means of which Allah establishes proof against them, that those who died might die after proof had been established against them.

It may be that what is referred to in the words «This is a clarification for all humankind» is the Holy Qur'an and that it is a clarification for people in general, and guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah in particular. Both meanings are correct.



﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾﴾ إِنَّ يَمَسُّكُمْ فَرَحٌ
فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ فَرَحٌ يُشْلِيهِ وَيَذُلُّ بِهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلَيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذُ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ نَظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٩-١٤٣)

- 3:139. So do not lose heart nor grieve, for you will overcome if you are [truly] believers.
- 3:140. If you have suffered a blow, the [disbelieving] people have suffered a blow like it. Such days [of varying fortunes] We give to people by turns, so that Allah may know those who believe and so that He may choose martyrs from among you. And Allah does not love the wrongdoers.
- 3:141. And so that Allah may purify the believers and destroy the disbelievers.
- 3:142. Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?

3:143. You did indeed wish for death before you met it; now you have seen it with your own eyes.

Allah (ﷻ) says, encouraging His believing slaves, strengthening their resolve and raising their spirits:

﴿So do not lose heart nor grieve﴾ that is, do not weaken physically, and do not let your hearts be filled with grief because of the calamity that has befallen you and the trial you have gone through. Grief in the heart and physical weakness will only make the calamity worse for you and give your enemy an advantage over you. Rather you should be of good courage and be steadfast, ward off grief and strengthen your resolve to fight your enemy.

Here Allah tells them that it is not appropriate or befitting for them to lose heart and feel grief when they will overcome by virtue of their faith and hope of the support and reward of Allah. The believer who is certain of what Allah has promised of reward in this world and the hereafter should not feel like that. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for you will overcome if you are [truly] believers﴾.

Then He consoles them for what they suffered of defeat and explains the great wisdom that resulted in that:

﴿If you have suffered a blow, the [disbelieving] people have suffered a blow like it﴾ so you and they are equal in terms of blows suffered, but you have hope in Allah that they do not have, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships; but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for...﴾

(an-Nisâ' 4: 104)

One of the lessons that we learn from that is that Allah may give worldly comforts to both believers and disbelievers, those who are righteous and those who are evildoers, and Allah alternates the fortunes of people, one day for this group and one day for the other

group, because this world will come to an end, unlike the hereafter, which is only for those who believe.

﴿so that Allah may know those who believe﴾ this is another lesson: Allah tests His slaves with defeat and trials in order to distinguish the believer from the hypocrite, because if the believers were always victorious in all battles, people would enter Islam without really wanting it. But if various kinds of trials occur in some battles, those believers who truly want Islam in good times and bad, in ease and in hardship, will become distinct from those who are not like that.

﴿and so that He may choose martyrs from among you﴾. This is another lesson, because martyrdom is one of the highest statuses before Allah, and there is no way of attaining it without the means that lead to it. By His mercy towards His believing slaves, He has made available means of attaining it even though it is hard for them, so that they may attain what they want of high status and eternal blessing.

﴿And Allah does not love the wrongdoers﴾ who wrong themselves and refrain from fighting in His cause. It is as if this is an implicit criticism of the hypocrites, stating that they are hated by Allah, and that is why He held them back from joining the fight in His cause.

﴿If they had truly wanted to go forth, they would surely have made preparations to do so, but Allah disliked their going forth, so He made them lag behind, and it was said to them: Stay behind with those who are staying behind.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 46)

﴿And so that Allah may purify the believers﴾. This is another lesson, that Allah purifies the believers thereby from their sins. This indicates that martyrdom and fighting in Allah's cause expiate sins, and Allah also makes the believers distinct from the hypocrites, so that they may rid themselves of them and know the believer from the hypocrite.

Another lesson we learn is that Allah decrees that in order to destroy the disbelievers; in other words, it is a means of eradicating

them through (divine) punishment, because if they prevail they will go to extremes and increase in wrongdoing, which will make them deserving of an expedited punishment. This is out of mercy towards His believing slaves.

Then Allah says: ﴿Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?﴾. This appears in the form of a question but serves as a statement that it is not as you think. In other words, do not think, and do not let it cross your mind, that you will enter paradise without facing hardship and putting up with difficulties in the cause of Allah and seeking His pleasure. For paradise is the highest of aspirations and the best thing for which people compete. The greater the goal, the greater the means of attaining it and the deeds by which one reaches it. The life of ease and comfort (in the hereafter) cannot be attained except by giving up a life of ease and comfort (in this world).

But if a person prepares himself and trains himself to face the hardships of this world that one may go through for the sake of Allah, bearing the end result in mind, these trials – for those who have insight – will turn into gifts at which he feels joy and does not worry. This is the grace of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He wills.

Then Allah (ﷻ) rebukes them for not being steadfast with regard to what they wished for and hoped would take place:

﴿You did indeed wish for death before you met it﴾. That was because many of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) had missed the Battle of Badr, and they wished that Allah would cause them to witness a battle so that they could do their utmost. Allah said to them: ﴿now you have seen it with your own eyes﴾ so why did you not remain steadfast? This is not appropriate and it is not good, especially for one who wished for that and got what he wished for. What he should have done is strive his utmost.

This verse indicates that there is nothing wrong with wishing for martyrdom, because Allah (ﷻ) approved of their wishes and did not criticise them for that; rather He criticised them for not acting upon their wishes. And Allah knows best.



﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾
 ﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِنَّا مُوَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَيَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾
 (سورة آل عمران: ١٤٤-١٤٥)

- 3:144. Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you then turn on your heels? Those who turn on their heels do not harm Allah in the slightest, but Allah will reward those who are grateful.
- 3:145. No soul can die except by Allah's leave, and at an appointed time. Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof. And We will reward those who are grateful.

«Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him» that is, he is not the first of the Messengers; rather he is like the Messengers who came before him, whose job was to convey the messages of their Lord and carry out His commands. They are not immortal and their remaining alive is not a condition of obeying the commands of Allah; rather what people are required to do is worship their Lord at all times and in all circumstances. Hence

He said: «If he dies or is slain, will you then turn on your heels?» by abandoning what he brought of faith or jihad and the like.

«Those who turn on their heels do not harm Allah in the slightest»; rather they only harm themselves and Allah has no need of them. He will cause His religion to prevail and will grant victory to His believing slaves. When Allah (ﷻ) rebuked those who turned on their heels, He praised those who remained steadfast with His Messenger (ﷺ) and obeyed the command of their Lord: «but Allah will reward those who are grateful». Gratitude can only be by being a true slave of Allah in all circumstances.

In this verse Allah (ﷻ) gives instructions to His slaves that they should be in such a state that their faith cannot be shaken and they should not lose their resolve to adhere to some of its requirements because of the loss of a leader, even if he was great. That state can only be attained by making preparations in all matters of their religion, by having many qualified people who could step in so that if one is lost, another can take his place. The aim of ordinary people should be to establish the religion of Allah and strive in His cause as much as possible, and they should not be too attached to one leader rather than another. Thus their affairs will be in order and they will be in good shape.

This verse also offers the greatest proofs of the virtue of the greatest *ṣiddeeq*, Abu Bakr, and his companions who fought the apostates after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), because they were foremost among those who are grateful.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that all souls have an appointed time of death, by Allah's leave and in accordance with His will and decree. If it is decreed for a person to die, he will die even if that is with no apparent cause, and if He wills that a person will live, even if he is exposed to all causes of death, nothing will harm him before he reaches his appointed time (of death). That is because Allah has willed and decreed that he should live until the appointed time:

﴿..when their appointed time comes, they will not be able to delay it for a single moment or bring it forward.﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 34)

Then Allah tells us that He will give reward to people in this world and in the hereafter, according to what they hope for:

﴿Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof﴾.

And Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿On all – both the latter and the former – We bestow of the bounty of your Lord. Verily, the bounty of your Lord is not denied [to anyone]. See how We have bestowed more on some than on others [in this world], but verily the hereafter will have higher ranks and greater degrees of excellence for some over others﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 20-21)

﴿And We will reward those who are grateful﴾. Allah does not mention what their reward is, to indicate how great and abundant it will be, and so that it will be known that the reward will be commensurate with the level of gratitude.

❁ ❁

﴿وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ نَّجْيٍ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِيتُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَكَانَتْ لَهُمْ ثَوَابٌ لَّدُنِّيَا وَحَسَنُ ثَوَابٍ الْآخِرَةُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤٦-١٤٨)

3:146. How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's cause], and multitudes of devout men fought alongside them, but they never lost heart because of the suffering they endured in Allah's cause, nor did they weaken [in resolve] nor yield. And Allah loves those who are steadfast.

- 3:147. All they said was: Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our conduct, make firm our foothold and grant us victory against the disbelievers.
- 3:148. So Allah gave them reward in this world and the excellent reward of the hereafter. For Allah loves those who do good.

This passage offers consolation to the believers and encourages others to follow their example and do as they did. This is something that has happened before, and it is the way of Allah that could happen again.

﴿How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's cause], and multitudes of devout men fought alongside them﴾ that is, large numbers of their followers, in whose hearts the Prophets had instilled faith that led them to do righteous deeds, and they suffered death, injuries and so on.

﴿but they never lost heart because of the suffering they endured in Allah's cause, nor did they weaken [in resolve] nor yield﴾ that is, their courage never weakened and they did not tire physically or yield, that is, they did not give in to their enemies. Rather they remained patient and steadfast, pulling themselves together and carrying on. Hence Allah says: ﴿And Allah loves those who are steadfast﴾.

Then He mentions what they said, seeking victory from their Lord: ﴿All they said﴾ in those difficult circumstances ﴿was: Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our conduct﴾. Excess means overstepping the mark and doing what is forbidden. They realised that sins and excesses are among the main causes of troubles, and that ridding themselves of these sins was one of the main means of attaining victory, so they asked their Lord to forgive them.

Moreover, they did not rely on their efforts to keep them steadfast; rather they relied on Allah and asked Him to make their foothold firm when meeting the disbelieving enemies in battle, and to grant them

victory. Thus they combined patience and steadfastness, and avoided the opposite thereof, in addition to repenting, seeking forgiveness and asking their Lord to grant them victory. So it is no wonder that Allah granted them victory and caused them ultimately to prevail, in this world and in the hereafter. Hence He said:

﴿So Allah gave them reward in this world﴾ in the form of victory and booty

﴿and the excellent reward of the hereafter﴾, which is attaining the pleasure of their Lord and eternal bliss that is free of anything that might spoil it. That is only because they strove their utmost for His sake, so He granted them the best reward. Hence Allah says:

﴿For Allah loves those who do good﴾ and do their best in worshipping their Creator and interacting with people. Part of doing good is to act like those who are described here when striving in jihad against the enemy.



﴿يَتَابِعُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ
أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ
﴿١٥٠﴾ سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ
بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ١٤٩-١٥١)

- 3:149. O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will make you turn on your heels, and thus you will turn back as losers.
- 3:150. Nay, Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of helpers.
- 3:151. Soon will We cast dread into the hearts of the disbelievers, because they ascribed partners to Allah, for which He had

not sent down any authority; their abode will be the fire, and wretched is the abode of the wrongdoers!

Here Allah forbids the believers to obey the disbelievers, whether they be hypocrites or polytheists, for if they do so, they intend only to do them harm; their goal is to bring them back to disbelief, which leads only to doom and loss.

Then Allah states that He is their protector and helper; this is glad tidings that He will take care of them by His kindness and protect them from all kinds of evil.

This provides encouragement for them to take Him alone as protector and helper, to the exclusion of all others. One aspect of His protection and help is that He promised them that He would cast dread into the hearts of their enemies among the disbelievers; this refers to great fear that would prevent them from achieving many of their goals. And He did indeed do that: when the polytheists departed after the battle of Uḥud, they discussed amongst themselves, saying: How could we have left after killing whom we killed and defeating them without eradicating them? They thought of going back, but Allah instilled dread in their hearts, so they left disappointed.

Undoubtedly this was the greatest help, because, as mentioned above, Allah helps His believing slaves in one of two ways: either He cuts down a section of the disbelievers or He disgraces them, so that they retreat in utter disappointment. In this case, the latter is applicable.

Then Allah mentions the reason why dread was cast into the hearts of the disbelievers:

﴿because they ascribed partners to Allah, for which He had not sent down any authority﴾ that is, it was because of the rivals and idols they took as gods instead of Him, which they did on the basis of their evil ulterior motives, with no proof or evidence, and they no longer sought protection from the One, the Most Merciful.

Hence the polytheists were in dread of the believers, and they had no strong support, and no one to turn to at times of hardship and distress. This was the situation in this world, and the hereafter is worse. Hence Allah said: ﴿and wretched is the abode of the wrongdoers﴾; because of their wrongdoing and transgression, the fire will become their final abode.



﴿وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُم بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا أُرِيكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ ۚ مِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٥٢)

3:152. Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when you, with His permission, were killing them, until you faltered and quarrelled among yourselves about the [Prophet's] orders, and disobeyed after He had shown you what you desired [of booty]. Among you are some that seek worldly gains and some that seek rewards in the hereafter. Then He made you flee from them in order to test you but He forgave you, for Allah is most gracious to the believers.

﴿Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you﴾ of help; He helped you against them until they began to flee, and you started killing them, then you caused trouble for yourselves and helped your enemy against you, when you faltered

﴿and quarrelled among yourselves about the [Prophet's] orders﴾ and thus ignored Allah's command to be united and not disagree. But you disagreed. Some said: We should remain in our positions where

the Prophet (ﷺ) stationed us; but others said: Why should we stay when the enemy has started to flee and there is no longer any danger? Thus you disobeyed the Messenger (ﷺ) and ignored his instructions after Allah had shown you that which you love, namely the putting to flight of your enemies. What is required of the one whom Allah blesses with that which he loves is greater than that which is required of others, and in this particular case what was required was something specific; however, in general terms what is required is obedience to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿Among you are some that seek worldly gains﴾; they are the ones who caused all these troubles

﴿and some that seek rewards in the hereafter﴾; they are the ones who adhered to the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and remained where they had been ordered to stay.

﴿Then He made you flee from them﴾ that is, after you did these things, Allah caused you to flee from them. The course of events turned in the enemy's favour, as a test and trial from Allah to you, in order to distinguish between the believer and the disbeliever, the obedient and the disobedient, and so that by means of this calamity Allah might expiate for you that which you had brought about. Hence Allah said: ﴿but He forgave you, for Allah is most gracious to the believers﴾ that is, He is most gracious to them, as He blessed them with Islam, guided them to His religion, forgave them their bad deeds and made them steadfast at the time of calamity.

By His grace towards the believers, He does not decree for them any good or any calamity but it is ultimately good for them. If something good happens to them, they give thanks and He grants them the reward of those who are grateful; if something bad happens to them, they bear it with patience and He grants them the reward of those who are patient.



﴿ إِذْ تَصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَكْلُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أَخْرَجِكُمْ فَأَتْبَعَكُمْ كَمًا بِغَيْرِ لِكَيْلًا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ ﴿١٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنًا نُعَاسًا يَفْعَلُونَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْكُمْ وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنْ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ يَخْفَوْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يَبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَا قُتِلْنَا هُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

﴿ ١٥٣ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٣-١٥٤)

- 3:153. [Remember] when you were fleeing, paying no heed to anyone, and the Messenger at your rear was calling you back. So Allah gave you distress upon distress by way of requital, so that you should not grieve for what you missed or for what befell you. For Allah is well aware of what you do.
- 3:154. After that distress, He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber, while another group cared only about themselves, harbouring thoughts about Allah that were untrue – thoughts of ignorance. They said: Do we have any say in the matter? Say: All matters belong to Allah. They conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you. They say: If we had had any say in the matter, we would not have been killed here. Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds them of the state they were in at the time when they fled from the battle, and He rebukes them for that:

﴿[Remember] when you were fleeing, paying no heed to anyone﴾ that is, no one among you cared about anyone else or looked at him; rather your only concern was to flee and save yourselves from the battle.

But in fact there was no great danger, because you were not the closest of the people to the enemy or in the battlefield. Rather ﴿the Messenger at your rear was calling you back﴾. He was the closest to the enemy, and he was saying:

«Come to me, O slaves of Allah!» (A very odd hadith recorded by Ibn Katheer and Ibn Hajar)

But you did not pay attention to him or respond to his call. Fleeing in and of itself is blameworthy, but failing to respond to the call of the Messenger (ﷺ), to whom you should give precedence over yourselves, is even worse.

﴿So Allah gave you distress upon distress﴾ that is, the distress of missing out on victory and booty, the distress of fleeing, and that distress which made you forget all others, which was hearing that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed.

﴿by way of requital﴾ that is, requital for your deeds.

But Allah, by His grace and kindness towards His slaves, caused all of these things to be good for His believing slaves, as He said: ﴿so that you should not grieve for what you missed﴾ of victory and booty ﴿or for what befell you﴾ of defeat, killing and wounding. When you realised that the Messenger (ﷺ) had not been killed, all of these calamities became insignificant in your eyes, and you rejoiced in his survival, which was a consolation for all calamities and trials. How great are the hidden benefits and wisdom in calamities and trials.

All of that is based on His knowledge and complete awareness of your actions, both visible and hidden. Hence He said: ﴿For Allah is well aware of what you do﴾.

It may be that what is meant by the words: ﴿so that you should not grieve for what you missed or for what befell you﴾ is: He decreed that this distress and calamity should befall you, so that you would get used to it and become accustomed to being patient and steadfast at the time of calamities, and it would become easier for you to bear hardship.

﴿After that distress﴾ that befell you
 ﴿He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber﴾.

Undoubtedly this was mercy and kindness towards them, that brought reassurance to their hearts and made them feel at peace, because one who is in a state of fear cannot be overtaken by slumber, because of the fear in his heart. But when the fear is removed from his heart, then it becomes possible for him to slumber.

This group whom Allah blessed with slumber were the believers who had no concern other than establishing the religion of Allah, attaining the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and acting in the interests of their Muslim brothers.

As for the other group, who ﴿cared only about themselves﴾, they had no other concern, because of their hypocrisy or the weakness of their faith. Hence slumber did not overtake them as it did others. ﴿They said: Do we have any say in the matter?﴾ This is a question that expresses disapproval; in other words they were expressing despair, thinking that victory would never be attained at all. They thought negatively of their Lord and His religion and Prophet (ﷺ); they thought that Allah could not cause His religion and His Messenger (ﷺ) to prevail, and that this defeat was the final blow to the religion of Allah.

Allah said in response to them:

﴿Say: All matters belong to Allah﴾; this includes what He decrees and what He prescribes; all things are subject to the will and decree

of Allah, and ultimate victory will be for His close friends and those who obey Him, no matter what setbacks they may face.

﴿They﴾ that is, the hypocrites ﴿conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you﴾. Then Allah describes what it is that they are concealing:

﴿They say: If we had had any say in the matter﴾ that is, if our opinion concerning this battle had been listened to, ﴿we would not have been killed here﴾.

This is criticism on their part, and disbelief in the will and decree of Allah; it also shows that they regarded the opinion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and that of his Companions, as foolish, and that they thought highly of themselves. But Allah responded to them by saying: ﴿Say: Even if you had remained in your homes﴾, which were far away from the places of killing, ﴿those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death﴾. Measures taken to protect oneself – no matter how great they may be – are only of benefit if they are not opposed by the divine will and decree. If they are opposed by the divine decree, they will be of no benefit at all; rather the decree of Allah concerning life and death, which is written in *al-Lawh al-Mahfūdh*, will inevitably come to pass.

﴿but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts﴾ that is, so that He might test what is in them of hypocrisy, faith or weakness of faith, and purify them of the whispers of the Shayṭān and the bad characteristics that stem therefrom.

﴿For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts﴾ and what you conceal. His knowledge and wisdom dictate that He should decree events by means of which what is hidden in people's hearts will become apparent.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٥)

3:155. As for those of you who fled on the day the two armies met, it was only because the Shayṭān made them slip, on account of some of their deeds. But Allah has pardoned them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about those who fled on the day of Uḥud and what caused them to flee; it was because of the whisper of the Shayṭān, who gained control over them because of some of their sins. Hence they are the ones who let him have control and power over them, because of the sins they committed; sins are his vehicle and the passage by which he enters. If they had remained obedient to their Lord, he would not have had any power over them. Allah says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, you will have no power over My slaves...﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 65)

Then Allah tells us that He has pardoned them, after they had committed actions for which they could be held accountable, otherwise if He had brought them to account, He could have eradicated them. ﴿for Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ to the sinners, by means of guiding them to repent and seek forgiveness, and by means of calamities that expiate sin.

﴿Most Forbearing﴾; He does not hasten their punishment for one who disobeys Him; rather He gives him respite and calls him to repent and turn to Him. Then if he repents and turns to Him, He accepts it from him and makes him like one who did not commit any sin. To Him be praise for His kindness.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُرَىٰ لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ ۚ وَيُخَيِّتُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٦١﴾ وَلَٰكِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ

لَمَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةً خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِن مُّتُّم أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٦-١٥٨)

- 3:156. O you who believe, do not be like the disbelievers, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the earth or go forth on a military campaign: If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain, for Allah will make such thoughts a source of anguish in their hearts. It is Allah Who gives life and death, and Allah sees well all that you do.
- 3:157. And if you are slain in the cause of Allah, or die, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could accumulate.
- 3:158. And if you die, or are slain, it is unto Allah that you will be gathered.

Here Allah forbids His believing slaves to be like the disbelievers who do not believe in their Lord or in His will and decree, whether they are the hypocrites or others.

He forbids them to be like them in any respect, especially in this particular matter, which is that they say to their brothers in faith or in blood, ﴿when they are travelling through the earth﴾ that is, travelling for the purpose of trade

﴿or go forth on a military campaign﴾, and it so happens that some of them are killed or die, they say something contrary to the concept of the divine decree: ﴿If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain﴾. This is a lie on their part, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death﴾ (3: 154).

But this lie is not going to benefit them; rather Allah will cause this statement and this belief to be a source of anguish in their hearts, which will lead to the calamities having a greater impact on them. As for those who believe in Allah, they realise that this is the will of

Allah, so they believe and submit to His will, and Allah guides their hearts and makes them steadfast, which reduces the impact of the calamity for them.

Allah says, refuting them: ﴿It is Allah Who gives life and death﴾ that is, He is the only One Who does that, and no precaution can ward off the divine decree.

﴿and Allah sees well all that you do﴾, and He will requite you for your deeds and your disbelief (in the divine decree).

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that there is nothing wrong with, and there should be no reservations about, being killed or dying in His cause; rather it is something for which people should compete, because it is a means that leads to forgiveness and mercy from Allah, which is better than what people accumulate of worldly gains. If people die or are killed, no matter how it happens, their return is to Allah and He will requite each person for his deeds.

So where can people flee except to Allah, and what do people have to hold on to except the rope of Allah?



﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

- 3:159. It is by the mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. If you had been harsh or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, and ask for [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and consult them in matters of importance. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him].

That is, by Allah's mercy to you and your Companions, He has blessed you in that you have been gentle with them and humble and kind towards them, and you showed a good attitude towards them, so they rallied around you and loved you, and they followed your commands.

﴿If you had been harsh﴾ that is, if you had shown a bad attitude or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you because this would have put them off and would have made them dislike the one who had a bad attitude.

A good attitude in a religious leader attracts people to the religion of Allah, in addition to what this leader himself will attain of praise and reward from Allah. In contrast, a bad attitude in a religious leader will put people off their religion and make them hate it, in addition to what the leader will incur of blame and punishment from Allah. If Allah says this about this infallible Messenger (ﷺ), then how about anyone else?

Is it not of the utmost necessity and importance to follow the example of his noble attitude and to treat people as he treated them, with gentleness, a good attitude and a soft approach, following the commands of Allah and attracting the slaves of Allah to the religion of Allah?

Then Allah (ﷻ) instructs him to pardon them for what they did and their shortcomings with regard to him, and to ask for forgiveness for them for their shortcomings with regard to the rights of Allah, thus combining pardon with kind treatment.

﴿and consult them in matters of importance﴾ that is, in matters that require consultation and thinking. The benefits of consultation in both religious and worldly matters are unlimited and include the following:

- Consultation is an act of worship that brings one closer to Allah.

- It is an act of gentleness that makes people feel part of the decision-making process and removes any (negative) thought that could cross their minds when serious decisions need to be made. If one who has a position of authority gathers together people of prominence and wisdom, and consults them concerning some event or incident, that will make them feel at ease and make them love him, and they will realise that he is not some sort of tyrant; rather his main focus is on the general interests of all. Thus they will spare no effort and will do their utmost in obeying him, because they will realise that he is striving to serve the interests of all. This is in contrast to those who are not like that, because it is unlikely that they will be sincere in loving or obey him willingly; if they do obey him, it will be insincere and incomplete.
- Consultation sheds light on new ideas, because it brings many minds together to make the right decision.
- Consultation usually leads to the right decision; the leader who consults others in decision-making will hardly ever reach the wrong conclusion. Even if a wrong decision is made or the goal is not met, he will not be to blame (because it will have been a collective decision). If Allah says to His Messenger (ﷺ) – who is the most perfect of people in reasoning, has the most abundant knowledge and is the smartest – ﴿and consult them in matters of importance﴾, then how about others?

Then Allah says: ﴿Then, when you have taken a decision﴾ that is, when you have decided upon something after consulting others, if consultation is needed,

﴿put your trust in Allah﴾ that is, rely on the power and strength of Allah, not on your own strength and power

﴿for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him]﴾ and turn to Him.



﴿إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذَلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۖ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٠)

3:160. If Allah helps you, none can overcome you; if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, who can help you? In Allah, then, let the believers put their trust.

That is, if Allah sends to you His support and help, «none can overcome you», even if they gather against you all the people of earth, with all their numbers and weapons, because no one can overcome Allah; He has subjugated all people and has taken hold of their forelocks, so no living being moves or stands still except by His leave.

«if He forsakes you» and leaves you to your own devices «who is there, after that, who can help you?» You will inevitably be defeated, even if all people help you. In this there is an implicit command to seek the help of Allah and rely on Him, and to admit that you have no strength and power of your own. Hence Allah says: «In Allah, then, let the believers put their trust». The fact that Allah is mentioned at the beginning of this phrase indicates that they should put their trust in Him alone and in no one else, because it is known that He is the only supporter, so relying on Him is indicative of belief in His oneness which will help you reach your goal, whereas putting your trust in anything else is a kind of associating others with Him which is of no benefit at all, rather it is harmful.

In this verse is a command to put one's trust in Allah alone, and the level of trust will be commensurate with the level of the individual's faith.



﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ وَمَنْ يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦١)

- 3:161. It is inconceivable that a Prophet would ever misappropriate anything from the war booty. Anyone who does so will carry it with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned and no one will be wronged.

The word translated here as misappropriation, or taking things by stealth, from the war booty may also refer to dishonesty in any position of authority. It is haram according to scholarly consensus; in fact it is a major sin, as indicated by this verse and other texts. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that it is not appropriate or befitting for a Prophet to misappropriate anything, because misappropriation – as is well known – is one of the gravest of sins and the most shameful behaviour. Allah (ﷻ) protected His Prophets from committing any action that might cause shame or undermine their status, and He made them the best of people in manners and attitude, the purest in soul and the best; He made them free of any shameful deeds and made them fit to receive His message and learn His wisdom.

﴿...Allah knows best where to place His message...﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 124)

As soon as a person learns of any of them, he will be certain that they are free of anything that could be a source of shame or criticism, and he will not need to examine what was said about them by their enemies, because knowing that they are Prophets requires one to reject anything bad that is attributed to them. Hence the wording of the verse indicates that it is impossible that they could do such a thing:

«It is inconceivable that a Prophet would ever misappropriate anything from the war booty» that is, it is not possible; that is impossible for one whom Allah has chosen to be His Prophet (ﷺ).

This is followed by the warning to anyone who misappropriates anything from the war booty:

«Anyone who does so will carry it with him on the Day of Resurrection» that is, he will come carrying it on his back, whether it was an animal or goods or anything else, so that it will be a cause of punishment to him on the Day of Resurrection.

«Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned», whether it was misappropriation of the war booty or anything else; each person will be given his reward or punishment in full, according to his earnings

«and no one will be wronged» that is, nothing will be added to their bad deeds and nothing will be detracted from their good deeds.

Look at the careful wording in this verse. When Allah speaks of the punishment for misappropriation of war booty, and says that the person will come on the Day of Resurrection carrying what he stole, mentioning requital in full for the misappropriation of war booty on its own may give the wrong impression that those who commit other sins may not be requited in full; therefore, He mentioned requital in full in general terms, as being applicable both to the one who misappropriates war booty and others (who commit other sins).



﴿أَفَمَنْ أَتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَتِسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٢-١٦٣)

- 3:162. Is the one who seeks the good pleasure of Allah like the one who incurs the wrath of Allah, and whose abode is hell, a hapless journey's end?
- 3:163. They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah, and Allah sees well all that they do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the one whose aim is to please his Lord and who strives hard to do so and the one who does not do that and who persists in sin and incurs the wrath of his Lord are not equal. They are not equal according to His judgement and wisdom, and according to people's common sense.

﴿Is one who is a believer like one who is an evildoer? They are not equal.﴾ (as-Sajdah 32: 18)

Hence Allah says here: ﴿They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah﴾ that is, all of them vary in rank and status, according to the differences in their deeds.

Those who seek the pleasure of Allah and strive to attain high status and lofty positions, Allah will grant them reward by His grace and generosity, commensurate with their deeds. But those who seek that which displeases Allah and strive to go down to the lowest level will be requited according to their deeds. Allah (ﷻ) sees all that they do and nothing is hidden from Him; rather He knows it and it is recorded in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh. He has appointed His noble, trustworthy angels to record it and preserve it accurately.



﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِسَابَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ

مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٤)

3:164. Allah conferred grace upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although before that they had been in manifest error.

This grace that Allah has bestowed upon His slaves is the greatest blessing; indeed it is the basis of all blessings. This refers to His blessing them with this noble Messenger (ﷺ) through whom Allah saved them from misguidance and protected them from doom, as He says:

«Allah conferred grace upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves», whose lineage, character and language they knew; he was one of their own people and tribe, sincere and compassionate towards them, reciting to them the revelations of Allah, teaching them the words and meanings

«purifying them» of polytheism, sin, bad characteristics and all bad manners.

«and teaching them the Book» – either the Qur'an itself is what is meant by «the Book», or what is meant by «the Book» here is literacy, thus He has blessed them by teaching them how to read and write, by means of which one may acquire knowledge.

«and wisdom» that is, the Sunnah, which is the twin of the Qur'an; or it may refer to saying and doing the right thing at the right time, and understanding the subtleties of Sharia. Thus Allah combined for them the learning of the rulings and the means of implementing them with the means of attaining the benefits and fruits of the rulings. Thus they superseded everyone else by virtue of these great blessings, and they were devout and knowledgeable people.

«although before that» that is, before the sending of this Messenger (ﷺ) «they had been in manifest error», not knowing the path that would lead them to their Lord or how to cleanse and purify their souls; rather whatever appeared attractive to them in their ignorance, they did it, even if that contradicted the rational thinking of the world.



﴿أَوَلَمْ أَصْغَبْكُمْ مُصِيبَةً قَدْ أَصْغَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنْ هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصْغَبَكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنْعِ الْجَمْعَانِ فَيَا ذِي اللَّهِ وَلَيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَلَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَفَرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِأَخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قَاتَلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٥-١٦٨)

- 3:165. How is it that, when a calamity befalls you whilst you had inflicted twice as much [on your enemy], you say: Where has this come from? Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves. Verily Allah has power over all things.
- 3:166. What befell you on the day the two armies met happened by Allah's leave, in order that He might test the believers,
- 3:167. and in order to know those who are hypocrites. They were told: Come, fight in the cause of Allah, or at least defend yourselves. They said: If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you. They were that day nearer to disbelief than to faith, saying with their lips that which was not in their hearts, but Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal.
- 3:168. [They are] the ones that said of their [slain] brethren, while they themselves stayed behind: If only they had listened to us they would not have been slain. Say: Avert death from your own selves, if what you say is true.

This is consolation from Allah to His believing slaves, when calamity befell them on the day of Uḥud and approximately seventy of them were killed. Allah said: ﴿you had inflicted twice as much [on

your enemy]» that is, on the day of Badr, when you killed seventy of their prominent figures and captured seventy more. That should make it easier for you and reduce the impact of the calamity, even though you and they are not equal, for your slain are in paradise and their slain are in hell.

«you say: Where has this come from?» That is, where did this calamity and defeat come from?

«Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves» when you disputed and disobeyed after He showed you what you desired (of booty), so you only have yourselves to blame; beware of doing that which may lead to your doom.

«Verily Allah has power over all things», so avoid thinking negatively of Allah, for He is able to grant them victory, but He has perfect wisdom in testing you.

«...Thus [are you commanded]. If Allah had so willed, He could have exacted retribution upon them [without you fighting], but He [commands you to fight] in order to test some of you by means of others...» (Muhammad 47: 4)

Then Allah states that what befell them of killing and defeat on the day the two armies, the Muslim army and the polytheist army, met at Uḥud, happened by His leave and in accordance with His will and decree that cannot be avoided and must inevitably come to pass.

When the divine decree comes to pass, there is no option but to submit to it and accept it, for there is great wisdom behind His decree and it brings great benefit, and it is ordained so that the believers might be made distinct from the hypocrites who were commanded to fight and were told: «Come, fight in the cause of Allah» that is, to defend and protect the religion of Allah, seeking His pleasure

«or at least defend yourselves» and your families and city, even if you do not have any good intentions.

But they refused to do that, and gave excuses, saying: «If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you» that

is, if we knew that there would be fighting between you and them, we would follow you. But this was a lie; they knew and were certain, as was everyone else, that these polytheists were filled with hatred and rage towards the believers because of what the believers had inflicted on them (at Badr), and that they had spent a great deal of wealth and gathered all they could of men and weapons, and had come with a huge army, intending to attack the believers in their city, and they were very eager to fight them.

When such is the case, how could it be imagined that there would not be any fighting between them and the believers, especially when the Muslims had come out of Madinah to face them? This is impossible, but the hypocrites thought that this excuse would fool the believers.

﴿They were that day﴾ that is, at that time when they failed to come out with the believers

﴿nearer to disbelief than to faith, saying with their lips that which was not in their hearts﴾. This applies in particular to the hypocrites, who say and do what they think is the opposite of what is in their hearts. For example, they said: ﴿If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you﴾. But they did indeed know that there would be fighting.

This verse is quoted as evidence for the principle of “doing the lesser of two evils so as to ward off the greater, and doing that which serves a lesser interest when it is not possible to do that which serves a greater interest.” The hypocrites were commanded to fight for the sake of the religion, but if they could not do that, then they should at least defend their families and city.

﴿but Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal﴾ and He will cause it to be shown to His believing slaves and He will punish them for it.

﴿[They are] the ones that said of their [slain] brethren, while they themselves stayed behind: If only they had listened to us they would

not have been slain» that is, they combine staying behind from jihad with objecting to and disbelieving in the will and decree of Allah. Allah said in response to them: «Say: Avert» that is, ward off «death from your own selves, if what you say is true», that if they had listened to you, they would not have been killed. But you are not able to do that and you cannot do it.

This passage indicates that a person may have some characteristics of disbelief and some of faith, and he may be closer to one than the other.



﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾
فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ وَكَسَّيْتُهِمْ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ ۝ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٩-١٧١)

- 3:169. Do not think of those who are slain in Allah's cause as dead. Nay, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision,
- 3:170. rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty, sharing glad tidings that for those who have yet to join them, of those whom they left behind, they will have no fear, nor will they grieve;
- 3:171. Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah, and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost.

These verses speak of the virtue and honour of the martyrs, and what Allah has blessed them with of His grace and kindness. They also offer consolation to the living for the loss of those who were slain

and motivation to fight for the cause of Allah and offer themselves for martyrdom.

«Do not think of those who are slain in Allah's cause» that is, in jihad against the enemies of Islam, seeking thereby to make the word of Allah supreme

«as dead» that is, it should not enter your mind that they are dead and lost, and that they are no longer enjoying the pleasures of the life of this world that those who are too cowardly to fight and have no desire for martyrdom may be worried about losing.

«Nay» they have attained something greater than that for which people in this world compete, for «they are alive with their Lord» in the realm of honour. The phrase «with their Lord» is indicative of their high status and their closeness to their Lord

«receiving provision» of various kinds of delights that cannot be known or described, except by the One Who blessed them with it.

Moreover, they are «rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty» that is, they are very happy with it, delighted with it and rejoicing in it. That is because it is so beautiful, abundant and great, and there is immense joy when attaining it and there is nothing to spoil that joy.

For them, Allah combined the physical joy of the provision and the spiritual joy, with the joy of that which He bestows upon them out of His bounty. Thus their joy and happiness is complete, and they are «sharing glad tidings that for those who have yet to join them, of those whom they left behind» – that is, they give one another the glad tidings that their brothers who have not yet joined them will come and will attain the same as they did.

«they will have no fear, nor will they grieve» that is, they rejoice that they will have nothing to worry about for themselves or their brothers, which is a sign of perfect joy

«Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah» that is, congratulating one another for the greatest thing for which congratulations may be given, namely the blessings, grace and kindness of their Lord «and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost»; rather He causes it to grow and appreciates it, and He increases it by His grace to an extent that their efforts did not reach.

These verses affirm the blessings in *al-barzakh* and confirm that the martyrs enjoy the highest status with their Lord; in *al-barzakh* the souls of good people meet one another and visit one another, giving glad tidings to one another.



﴿الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لََّ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لَهُمْ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَنْتَسِبْهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيََاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا اللَّهَ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(١٧٥-١٧٢)

- 3:172. Those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after sustaining injuries, those who do good and fear Allah will have an immense reward;
- 3:173. those to whom people said: The people have gathered against you, so fear them. But it [only] increased them in faith. They said: Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

- 3:174. And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah, and no harm touched them, for they pursued the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace.
- 3:175. It is only the Shayṭân who instils fear in [the hearts of] his followers. Do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) came back from Uḥud to Madinah, and heard that Abu Sufyân and the polytheists with him were thinking of coming back to Madinah, he called on his Companions to go out, so they went out, despite the injuries they had sustained, in response to the call of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and in obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). When they reached Ḥamra' al-Asad, some people came to them and told them: «The people have gathered against you» and are thinking of eradicating you. They said this in order to scare them and cause alarm, but that only increased them in faith and trust in Allah.

«They said: Allah is Sufficient for us» that is, He is the One Who will protect us from all that is causing us concern
 «and He is the best disposer of affairs» that is, He is the One Who is in control of His slaves' affairs and looks after their interests.

«And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah, and no harm touched them». News reached the polytheists that the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions had come out to pursue them, and some of those who had stayed behind (from Uḥud) regretted it (and had now joined the Prophet [ﷺ]). Thus Allah instilled dread in the polytheists' hearts, and they continued on their way back to Makkah, while the believers returned with grace and bounty from Allah, as He blessed them by inspiring them to go out despite the state they were in (having sustained injuries in the battle) and to put their trust in their Lord. Moreover, He had decreed for them the reward of a complete campaign, because of their doing their best in obedience to their Lord

and refraining from sin. Thus they attained great reward, and that was by Allah's grace towards them.

«It is only the Shayṭān who instils fear in [the hearts of] his followers» that is, the one who tried to scare (the believers) by instilling fear of the polytheists, and telling them that the polytheists had gathered against them, was no more than one of the callers of the Shayṭān, who ended up scaring his own followers among those who lacked faith or were weak in faith.

«Do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers» that is, do not be afraid of the polytheists who are followers of the Shayṭān, for their forelocks are in the Hand of Allah and they cannot do anything but by His decree. Rather you should fear Allah Who supports His friends who fear Him and respond to His call.

This verse speaks of the obligation to fear Allah alone, and tells us that this is one of the requirements of faith. A person's fear of Allah will be commensurate with the level of his faith; this is the praiseworthy kind of fear that deters a person from doing that which Allah has forbidden.



﴿وَلَا يَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِزْبًا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٦-١٧٧)

- 3:176. Do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief; not the least harm will they do to Allah. It is Allah's will that they will have no share in the hereafter; theirs will be a grievous punishment.
- 3:177. Those who purchase disbelief at the cost of faith; not the least harm will they do to Allah, but theirs will be a painful punishment.

The Prophet (ﷺ) cared deeply about people and strove hard to guide them, and he would be saddened if they did not follow guidance. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief﴾ because of their great love for it and their eagerness to attain it.

﴿not the least harm will they do to Allah﴾ for Allah will support His religion and His Messenger (ﷺ), and His will and decree will come to pass despite them. So do not worry about them or be concerned about them; rather they are only harming and striving to harm themselves, by missing out on faith in this world and incurring the painful punishment in the hereafter. They have become insignificant in Allah's sight and it is His will that they should have no share of His reward in the hereafter. He has forsaken them, so He did not guide them to that to which He guided His close friends and those for whom He willed good, by His justice and wisdom, because of His knowledge that they were not fit to be guided and were not receptive to guidance, because of their bad attitude and intentions.

Then Allah tells us concerning those who chose disbelief over faith, and desired it like one who desires something he likes and gives his wealth to buy the thing he desires:

﴿not the least harm will they do to Allah﴾; rather their action backfires and harms them. Hence He said:

﴿but theirs will be a painful punishment﴾. How could they harm Allah in the slightest, when they have no interest at all in faith but they have the strongest desire to disbelieve in the Most Merciful? Allah has no need of them.

Allah has prepared for His religion people other than them among His righteous slaves, and He has prepared for His religion – among those with whom He is pleased with to support His religion – people of deep insight and reason, strong-willed men. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it,⁴ when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 107)



﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ مِّلِّي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا مِّلِّي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِفْسًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٨)

- 3:178. Those who disbelieve should not think that the respite We give them is good for them. We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sinfulness; theirs will be a humiliating punishment.

Those who disbelieved in their Lord, rejected His religion and fought His Messenger (ﷺ) should not think that Our leaving them alone in this world, not destroying them, and giving them respite is good for them or is because of Our love for them. No, that is not the case at all. It is not as they claim; rather that is for something bad that Allah wills for them, and it serves to increase their punishment in addition to the original punishment. Hence Allah says: ﴿We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sinfulness; theirs will be a humiliating punishment﴾. Allah (ﷻ) gives the wrongdoer respite so that he may increase in his transgression and go further in his ingratitude, so that when Allah seizes him, it will be the seizing of One Who is Almighty, All-Powerful (cf. 54: 42). So the wrongdoers should beware of this respite, and not think that they can escape the Great, the Most High.

⁴ Namely the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).



﴿ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ فَتَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّ فِى الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعُ مَا هُنَا لَفَاسَدَتْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ لَخَبِيرٌ ۙ بَصِيرٌ ۝۱۷۹ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٩)

- 3:179. On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition in which they are now, until He distinguishes the evil from the good, nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the unseen. But Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He will [to receive knowledge thereof]. So believe in Allah and His Messengers: And if you believe and guard against evil, you will have an immense reward.

By His wisdom, Allah does not leave the believers as they are, mixed with the hypocrites, with no distinction between the two groups; rather He distinguishes the evil from the good, the believer from the hypocrite, the sincere from the insincere.

Nor is it in accordance with His wisdom to disclose to His slaves matters of the unseen concerning what He knows about them. His great wisdom dictated that He should test His slaves with various trials which will distinguish the evil from the good. So Allah sent His Messengers and enjoined people to obey them, follow them and believe in them, and He promised them a great reward in return for believing and guarding against evil. Thus people are divided, according to whether they follow the Messengers, into two groups: obedient and disobedient, believers and hypocrites, Muslims and disbelievers, so that on this basis they will be rewarded or punished, and so as to make manifest His justice, grace and wisdom to His creation.



﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ سَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاتُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٠)

3:180. Those who covetously withhold what Allah has granted them by His grace should not think that it is good for them; rather it is bad for them, for the things which they covetously withheld will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well aware of what you do.

This refers to those who covetously withhold that which Allah has given to them by His grace of wealth, status, knowledge and other blessings, and commanded them to give some of it to His slaves in a manner that does not harm them, but they withheld it and kept it for themselves, and were too miserly to give to the slaves of Allah; they thought that it was better for them, when in fact it was bad for them in both spiritual and worldly terms, in this world and in the hereafter.

«for the things which they covetously withheld will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection» that is, what they withheld will be made like a collar on their necks, with which they will be punished, as it says in the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith:

«The miser's wealth will appear to him on the Day of Resurrection in the form of a bald-headed venomous snake with two fangs in its mouth which will hold him with its jaws, then it will say: I am your wealth, I am your treasure.» (Muslim)

Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited this verse in confirmation of that. These people who thought that their miserliness would benefit them and help them will find that it will turn out to be the opposite,

and it will become one of the greatest causes of harm and punishment for them.

﴿To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, Allah (ﷻ) is the Lord of all dominion, and all dominions will be returned to their real Lord. All people will leave this world without having any dirham or dinar, or any other possessions. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, it is We Who will inherit the earth and all who are upon it, and to Us they will be brought back.﴾ (Maryam 19: 40)

Think about how Allah mentions the initial reason (not to be miserly) and the ultimate reason, both of which should make one refrain from withholding that which Allah has given him.

First of all, He said that what a person has in his possession or in his hands is from Allah and His blessing. It does not belong to the individual; rather, were it not for the grace and kindness of Allah towards him, he could not have gained any of it. Thus his withholding of it is tantamount to withholding the bounty and kindness of Allah; Allah's kindness to him dictates that he should be kind to other people, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Be good to others, as Allah has been good to you...﴾ (al-Qasas 28: 77)

Whoever realises that whatever he possesses is by the grace of Allah will not withhold that which is surplus to his needs and that it will not harm him to give; rather he will benefit (from giving) both spiritually and financially, his faith will increase and he will be protected from troubles and problems.

Secondly, He says that what is in people's hands will all return to Allah; He will inherit it all, and He is the best of inheritors. Therefore there is no reason to withhold anything when it is going to be removed from your possession and go to someone else.

Thirdly, Allah mentions the reason that has to do with the requital, as He says: ﴿and Allah is well aware of what you do﴾. So if He is

aware of all your deeds – which implies that He will reward for good deeds and punish for bad deeds – no one in whose heart is an atom's weight of faith will refuse to give, because giving will be requited with reward, and he would not be happy to withhold it, because that leads to punishment.



﴿لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨١-١٨٢)

3:181. Allah has heard the words of those who say: Truly, Allah is poor and we are rich! We shall certainly record their words and their killing the Prophets unjustly, and We shall say: Taste the punishment of the scorching fire!

3:182. This is because of what your hands sent on ahead. For Allah is never unjust to [His] slaves.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the words of those evildoers, who said the most abhorrent and stupid things. He states that He has heard what they said, He will record it along with their evil deeds, namely the killing of the sincere Prophets, and He will punish them in the most severe manner, and it will be said to them, in response to their saying that Allah is poor and we are rich: ﴿Taste the punishment of the scorching fire﴾, which will burn and penetrate from the outside of the body to the inside. This punishment is not injustice from Allah towards them, for He ﴿is never unjust to [His] slaves﴾; rather He declares Himself to be above that.

Rather this is the return for what their hands sent on ahead of shameful and evil deeds that lead to them deserving punishment and being deprived of reward.

The commentators stated that this verse was revealed concerning some of the Jews who said these words, and mentioned that one of them was Finhâş ibn 'Âzoorâ', one of the leading Jewish scholars of Madinah. When he heard the words of Allah:

﴿Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan?...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 245)

– and:

﴿...and lend to Allah a goodly loan...﴾ (al-Hadeed 57: 18)

– he said these words, by way of arrogance and audacity, may Allah curse him. Hence He mentioned what they had said, and stated that this was not something new on their part; rather they had done similar evil deeds before, namely ﴿their killing the Prophets unjustly﴾ (3: 181). What is meant by describing that deed as unjust is that they had the audacity to kill the Prophets even though they were well aware of the abhorrent nature of the deed. They did not do it out of ignorance and misguidance; rather it was out of rebelliousness and stubbornness.



﴿الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَهِدَ إِلَيْنَا أَلاَّ نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِينَا بِالْقُرْآنِ
تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ ۚ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ
قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۖ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٣-١٨٤)

- 3:183. They [also] said: Allah has commanded us not to believe in any Messenger until he makes an offering that the fire [from heaven] will consume. Say: There came to you Messengers before me, with clear signs and with the sign you have mentioned. Why then did you kill them, if you are telling the truth?

3:184. Then if they reject you, Messengers before you were also rejected, even though they came with clear signs, the scriptures, and the Book of Enlightenment.

Here Allah tells us about these liars who said: «Allah has commanded us» that is, He has given us instructions «not to believe in any Messenger until he makes an offering that the fire [from heaven] will consume». Thus they combined telling lies about Allah and limiting the sign of the Messengers to that which they suggested of this obvious fabrication, whilst stating that if they did not believe in a Messenger who did not make an offering that would be consumed by fire (from heaven), then by doing so they would be obeying their Lord and adhering to His command. It is known that Allah supported every Messenger He sent with signs and proofs on the basis of which people would believe in him, and He did not limit it to what they suggested, yet despite that they said something false that they did not adhere to or act upon.

Hence Allah commanded His Messenger (ﷺ) to say to them: «Say: There came to you Messengers before me, with clear signs» that proved their truthfulness «and with the sign you have mentioned», of making an offering that the fire (from heaven) consumed. «Why then did you kill them, if you are telling the truth?» that is, in their claim that they would believe in a Messenger who made an offering that the fire (from heaven) consumed. Thus it becomes clear that they were lying, being stubborn and contradicting themselves.

Then Allah consoles His Messenger (ﷺ), and says: «Then if they reject you, Messengers before you were also rejected» that is, this is normal on the part of the wrongdoers; it is their custom to disbelieve in Allah and reject the Messengers of Allah. Their rejection of the Messengers of Allah is not because of any defect or shortcoming in what they brought, or because the proof was not clear. Rather the

Messengers «came with clear signs» that is, rational evidence and scriptural proof

«the scriptures» that is, the Books that were sent down from heaven, that could not be brought by anyone but the Messengers

«and the Book of Enlightenment», that sheds light on the rulings ordained by Allah and explains what they contain of rational and beautiful teaching. It also sheds light on true events. But this was their way, to not believe in the Messengers who were like this, so do not be saddened by them and do not worry about them.



﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ
عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٨٥)

- 3:185. Every soul will taste death, and only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for your deeds]. Whoever is saved from the fire and admitted to paradise will have triumphed, for the life of this world is nothing but a fleeting vanity.

This verse highlights the reality of this world in order to put people off being overly concerned with it because of its transient nature, for it is a fleeting vanity that dazzles with its adornment and deceives with its ostentatious displays, but it will come to an end and people will pass on to the realm of eternity, when they will be requited for what they did in this world, good or bad.

«Whoever is saved» that is, brought out «from the fire and admitted to paradise will have triumphed» that is, he will have attained the greatest victory of escaping from the eternal punishment and reaching the gardens of delight in which there is that which no eye has seen,

no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. What this verse means is that whoever is not saved from the fire and admitted to paradise has not triumphed; rather he is doomed to eternal misery and suffering.

This verse contains a subtle reference to joy and punishment in al-barzakh, and that people will be partially requited therein for what they did, and they will taste the reward or punishment of what they did in this world. This may be understood from the words «and only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for your deeds]». In other words, requital in full for one's deeds will only come on the Day of Resurrection; before that, (there will be some degree of requital) in al-barzakh, and even in this world, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: «We will surely cause them to taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment...» (as-Sajdah 32: 21)



﴿ تَتَّبَلُّوكَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيراً وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٦)

3:186. You will certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your persons; and you will certainly hear much that is hurtful, from those who were given the Book before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah. But if you are patient and fear Allah, that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah].

Here Allah addresses the believers, and tells them that they will be tested with regard to their possessions or wealth, in terms of obligatory and encouraged spending, and that their wealth will be exposed to

being used up in Allah's cause; they will also be tested with regard to their persons, by being required to carry burdens that are too heavy for many people, such as jihad in Allah's cause, in which they may be exposed to exhaustion or being killed or captured; or by being faced with sickness that may affect a person himself or those whom he loves.

﴿and you will certainly hear much that is hurtful, from those who were given the Book before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah﴾, such as impugning you and your religion, your Book and your Messenger.

There are a number of benefits in Allah's telling His believing slaves of that, such as the following:

- His wisdom dictates that these things should happen, in order to distinguish the sincere believer from others.
- Allah (ﷻ) decrees these things for them because of what He wills of good for them, in order to raise them in status, expiate their bad deeds, and increase them in faith and certainty. When He told them of that and it came to pass as He said:
﴿...they said: This is what Allah and his Messenger had promised us, and the promise of Allah and His Messenger is true. And it only increased them in faith and submission.﴾
(*al-Aḥzâb* 33: 22)
- Allah told them about that in order to make them get used to such things happening and to bear it with patience if they did happen, because then they would be prepared for it happening, which would make it easier to bear. This would make them better able to cope with it and would prompt them to resort to patience and fear of Allah. Hence He said: ﴿But if you are patient and fear Allah﴾ that is, if you bear with patience whatever trials and tests befall you with regard to your possessions and your persons, and whatever hurtful words the wrongdoers address to you, and you be mindful of Allah whilst being patient, by intending it for His sake and hoping to draw close to Him, without going to

extremes or overstepping the mark in showing patience, such as showing patience in situations where it is not appropriate to do so and in which your role is to wreak vengeance upon the enemies of Allah, then ﴿that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah]﴾ that is, it is one of the things that one must adhere to and compete in, and no one is helped to attain it except people of strong resolve and high ambition, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿But none can attain that except those who are patient, and none can attain it except one who is blessed with a great share of good and righteousness.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 35)



﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ، فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُوتُوا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٧-١٨٨)

- 3:187. And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the scripture, that they should make it known and clear to humankind, and not conceal it; but they cast it behind their backs, and sold it for a small price; what a wretched trade they made!
- 3:188. Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done – do not think that they can escape the punishment. Theirs will be a painful punishment.

The covenant is a confirmed, binding promise. Allah (ﷻ) took this covenant from everyone to whom He gave the scriptures and taught

knowledge, that they should teach the people whatever they need of what Allah taught them, and they should not conceal that from them or withhold it, especially if the people ask for it or if something happens that necessitates teaching them, because everyone who has knowledge must, in that case, disclose it and explain that which distinguishes truth from falsehood.

Those who were guided fulfilled that duty properly and taught the people some of that which Allah had taught them, seeking the pleasure of their Lord and out of compassion towards other people, and for fear of committing the sin of concealing it.

As for those who were given the scripture, the Jews, Christians and others like them, they cast these covenants behind their backs and did not care about them. Thus they concealed the truth and made falsehood manifest, out of audacity and carelessness in transgressing the limits set by Allah, and out of negligence concerning the rights of Allah and the rights of other people. But all they got in return for that concealment was a small price, which is what they obtained of positions of leadership and a miserable amount of wealth from the foolish ones who follow their whims and desires and give precedence to their desires over the truth.

«what a wretched trade they made» because it is the most miserable and cheap trade; what they gave away in this exchange – which was explaining the truth which leads to eternal happiness and serves people's interests, both spiritual and worldly – is the most important and greatest of aims. They only chose that which is vile and base, and gave up that which is sublime and precious, because of their misfortune and insignificance, and because they were not fit for anything other than that for which they were created.

Then Allah says: «Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done» of evil actions and falsehood in word and deed

﴿and love to be praised for what they have not done﴾ that is, for the good things that they have not done and the truth that they have not spoken. Thus they combined doing and saying evil things, and rejoicing therein, with love of being praised for good things that they have not done.

﴿do not think that they can escape the punishment﴾ that is, they are not in any position to be saved from it; rather they deserve it and it will inevitably befall them. Hence Allah says: ﴿Theirs will be a painful punishment﴾.

This verse includes the People of the Book who rejoiced in the knowledge that they had, but they did not follow the Messenger (ﷺ), and they claimed that they were in the right in everything they did and said. The same applies to everyone who follows innovation in word or deed, rejoicing in it, calling others to it and claiming that they are in the right whilst others are in the wrong, as the innovators do.

This verse indicates that if the one who likes to be praised for what he does of good deeds and following the truth does not have the aim of showing off and enhancing his reputation, then he is not to be blamed. Rather this is something that one may seek, and He may reward in this manner those who do and say good things for His sake. Allah grants this reward to people of special standing who ask Him for that, as Ibrāheem (عليه السلام) said:

﴿And grant me an honourable renown among the later nations.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arā* 26: 84)

And Allah says:

﴿Peace be upon Nooh among all nations. Thus do We reward those who do good.﴾ (*aṣ-Ṣāffāt* 37: 79-80)

And the worshippers of the Most Merciful say:

﴿...and make us good examples for those who fear You.﴾ (*al-Furqān* 25: 74)

This is one of the blessings that Allah bestows upon His slaves, and one of His favours for which thanks must be given.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(١٨٩)

- 3:189. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allah has power over all things.

That is, He is the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them of all types of creatures; He controls them with perfect might and power, so no one can resist Him or frustrate Him.



﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۚ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٠﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَجَعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَتَأْمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا وَءَاثِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٠-١٩٤)

- 3:190. Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding,
- 3:191. People who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and

the earth, [with the thought]: Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the punishment of the fire.

3:192. Our Lord, whomever You cause to enter the fire, You have surely brought to disgrace, and the wrongdoers will have no helpers.

3:193. Our Lord! We have heard a caller calling [us] to faith, [saying]: Believe in the Lord, and we have believed. Our Lord, forgive us our sins, expiate our bad deeds, and cause us to die in the company of the righteous.

3:194. Our Lord, grant us what You have promised to us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection, for You never break Your promise.

Here Allah tells us that ﴿Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding﴾. This encourages people to think deeply, examine these signs and contemplate the creation. He left the word ﴿signs﴾ ambiguous, and did not state explicitly what it points to, as an indication of the great number and ubiquitous nature of those signs. That is because in creation there are amazing signs that dazzle those who look upon them, convince those who ponder them, attract the hearts of those who are sincere and strengthen the faith of people of understanding.

But the details of what these signs contain are impossible for any person to list or even comprehend some of them. In conclusion, what we see in them of greatness, the vastness and order in the movement of heavenly bodies, point to the greatness of their Creator and His power, which encompasses all things. Their perfection, precision and beauty point to the wisdom of Allah, His control over all things and the vastness of His knowledge. The benefits they bring to people are indicative of the vastness of Allah's mercy, the all-encompassing

nature of His grace and kindness, and the necessity of being grateful to Him.

All of that indicates that the heart should only be attached to its Creator and originator, and should do its utmost to seek His pleasure, and not associate with Him any of those who have not even an atom's weight of power over themselves or others on earth or in heaven.

Allah has intended these signs only for people of understanding, namely the people of reason, because they are the ones who benefit from that and who contemplate the signs with reason, and do not merely look at them with their eyes.

Then Allah describes the people of understanding as being: ﴿People who remember Allah﴾ in all circumstances, ﴿standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides﴾. This includes all types of remembrance of Allah, both verbal and in the heart. That includes praying standing; if that is not possible, then sitting; and if that is not possible then lying on one's side.

﴿and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, so that they may reach the conclusion intended (that there is a great Creator). This indicates that reflection is an act of worship, and is one of the characteristics of the close friends of Allah. When they reflect upon these things, they realise that Allah did not create them in vain, and they say:

﴿Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. Glory be to You﴾ and exalted be You above all that is not befitting to Your Majesty; rather You created it in truth, for truth, and including truth.

﴿Save us from the punishment of the fire﴾ by protecting us from doing bad deeds, and helping us to do righteous deeds, so that we might attain thereby salvation from the fire. This is an implicit prayer for paradise, because – if Allah protects them from the punishment of the fire – they will attain paradise. But as this fear is entrenched in their hearts, they call upon Allah referring to that which most concerns them.

﴿Our Lord, whomever You cause to enter the fire, You have surely brought to disgrace﴾ that is, because he has incurred the wrath of Allah and of His angels and close friends, and has become subject to inescapable shame.

Hence Allah says: ﴿and the wrongdoers will have no helpers﴾ to save them from His punishment. This indicates that they will enter it because of their wrongdoing.

﴿Our Lord! We have heard a caller calling [us] to faith﴾, namely Muhammad (ﷺ). What is meant is: he is calling the people to faith, and encouraging them to believe in the major and minor matters of faith

﴿and we have believed﴾ that is, we hastened to respond to him. This is an acknowledgement on their part of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon them, and an expression of joy in that blessing, asking Him by virtue thereof to forgive their sins and expiate their bad deeds, because good deeds erase bad deeds. The One Who blessed them with faith will bless them with complete security (on the Day of Resurrection).

﴿and cause us to die in the company of the righteous﴾. This supplication implies guidance to do good and refrain from evil, by virtue of which one will become one of the righteous and will continue in that path and remain steadfast until death.

When they mentioned Allah's guiding them to faith and beseeched Him to complete His favour, they asked Him to reward them for that, and to fulfil what He had promised to them on the lips of His Messengers, of victory in this world and the attainment of Allah's pleasure and paradise in the hereafter, for Allah (ﷻ) does not break His promise. Allah answered their prayer and accepted their request, hence He says:



﴿فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ ۖ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقُتِلُوا وَقَتَلُوا لَا كُفْرَانَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا أَذْخَلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِمَّنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٥)

- 3:195. Their Lord has answered them: Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female; you are both the same in that respect. Those who have left their homes, and been driven out therefrom, and suffered harm for My sake, and fought and been slain, verily, I will expiate their bad deeds, and admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, a reward from Allah; with Allah is the best reward.

That is, Allah answered their supplication (*du'a*) and said: I will not allow the work of any of you, male or female, to be lost; each of you will receive the reward of his or her deeds in full.

﴿you are both the same in that respect﴾ that is, all of you are equal in terms of reward and punishment.

﴿Those who have left their homes, and been driven out therefrom, and suffered harm for My sake, and fought and been slain﴾: they combined faith and migration, leaving behind what one loves of homeland and property, seeking the pleasure of their Lord and striving in the cause of Allah.

﴿verily, I will expiate their bad deeds, and admit them into gardens through which rivers flow, a reward from Allah﴾, Who grants abundant reward to His slave for little effort.

﴿with Allah is the best reward﴾ such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. Whoever wants that, let him ask Allah for it by virtue of his obedience, and strive to draw close to Him by whatever means he can.



﴿لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَيْسَ الْمِهَادِ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهُهُمْ هُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نَزَّلَا مِنَ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(196-198)

- 3:196. Do not be deceived by the [uninhibited] movement of the disbelievers throughout the land:
- 3:197. It is only a brief enjoyment; their ultimate abode is hell, what a wretched resting-place!
- 3:198. But for those who fear their Lord are gardens, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever, a welcoming gift from Allah; and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.

These verses offer consolation (to the believers) for what the disbelievers have of pleasure and enjoyment in this world, and freedom of movement for the purposes of trade, earning a living and leisure, and different kinds of power and prevalence at various times. All of that is ﴿only a brief enjoyment﴾ that will not last; rather they will enjoy it for a while, then they will be punished for it for a long time. This is the best state that the disbeliever may be in, and you see how it will end.

As for those who fear their Lord and believe in Him – in addition to attaining honour and joy in this world, they will have: ﴿gardens, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever﴾.

If it so happens that in this world they encounter misery, hardship, suffering and difficulties, that will be insignificant in comparison to eternal delight, good living, happiness and joy (in the hereafter); it will be a gift in the form of a trial. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿that which is with Allah is best for the righteous﴾. The righteous are those whose

hearts, words and deeds are righteous. The Most Magnificent, Most Merciful will grant them an immense reward and eternal victory, by His grace.



﴿ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَايَتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٩-٢٠٠)

3:199. Verily, among the People of the Book, there are those who believe in Allah, and in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah. They do not sell the revelations of Allah for a small price. These will have their reward with their Lord; verily Allah is swift in reckoning.

3:200. O you who believe, be steadfast and stand firm, be on the alert, and fear Allah; that you may prosper.

That is, some of the People of the Book are guided to goodness; they believe in Allah and they believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down to them. This is the faith that is beneficial; it is not like the faith of one who believes in some of the Messengers and Books, and rejects others.

Hence – because their belief was comprehensive and real – it became beneficial for them, which led them to humble themselves before Allah and submit to His Majesty, which made them follow His commands, heed His prohibitions and adhere to His limits.

These are People of the Book and knowledge in the true sense, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...Among His slaves, only those who have knowledge truly fear Allah...﴾ (Fâtir 35: 28)

A sign of their complete humility before Allah is that they ﴿do not sell the revelations of Allah for a small price﴾. So they do not give precedence to worldly interests over religious interests, as is done by the deviant people who conceal that which Allah revealed and sell it for a small price.

These people have come to know the truth of the matter and realised that it is the greatest loss to be content with that which is cheap and inferior, and to give it precedence over religious commitment, or to focus on some base desires of the *nafs* and overlook the truth, which is the greatest gain and triumph in this world and the hereafter; thus they give precedence to the truth, explain it, call others to it and warn against falsehood. Therefore Allah rewards them for that; He promised them a great reward and told them that it is near and that He is swift in reckoning, so that they will not think that what Allah promised them is slow in coming, because whatever is coming and there is no doubt about it is in fact near.

Then Allah urges the believers to do that which will bring them to prosperity, which is victory, happiness and success. The way to attain that is to adhere to patience, which means disciplining oneself to do that which one finds hard, such as refraining from sin, being steadfast at the time of calamity and adhering to commands that one finds burdensome. So Allah commands them to be patient in all these cases. Standing firm means being patient and steadfast, and resisting the enemy in all circumstances.

Being on the alert means staying in the place where there is a fear the enemy could reach, keeping a lookout for the enemy and preventing them from reaching their goals, so that they (the believers)

may prosper, attain what they want in both religious and worldly terms and in the hereafter, and be safe from that which they fear.

Thus we learn that there is no way to attain prosperity without being steadfast, standing firm, and being on the alert as mentioned. Those who prosper only do so by means of these things, and people only miss out on prosperity because they overlook these things or some of them.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat Āl 'Imrān.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



04.

Soorat an-Nisâ'

(Madani)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ (سورة

النساء: ١)

- 4:1. O humankind, fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide. Fear Allah, in Whose name you demand your mutual [rights], and be mindful of your ties of kinship, for Allah is always watching you.

This *soorah* begins with the command to fear Allah and worship Him, and to uphold ties of kinship. We are urged to do these things, and in this *soorah* Allah explains the reason for all of that, and why we should fear Him.

﴿your Lord, Who created you﴾, provided for you and bestowed great blessings upon you, which includes His creation of you ﴿from a single soul, and from it created its mate﴾ so that there would be compatibility between them and that he may find comfort in her, thus the blessing will be completed and joy will be attained.

There is also another reason to fear Him, which is that you demand your mutual rights in His name, and venerate Him by doing so, in that when you want your needs to be met and your goals fulfilled, you try to get it by asking for it in the name of Allah. So the one who wants that says to another person: I ask you by Allah to do such and such. That is because he knows what the other person has in his heart of veneration towards Allah, which will make him not reject anyone who asks him by Allah. So just as you venerate Him by doing that, you should also venerate Him by worshipping Him and fearing Him.

Similarly, Allah tells us that He is always watching; in other words, He can see his slaves in all that they do, in secret and in public, for He is always watching them. This should prompt us to remember that He is always watching, and thus feel shy before Him, by constantly fearing Him.

By telling us that He created them from a single soul and that He spread them throughout the earth, even though they have one origin, this should make them compassionate and kind towards one another. Alongside the command to fear Him comes the command to be mindful of ties of kinship and the prohibition on severing these ties. This serves to affirm the importance of upholding ties of kinship: just as it is obligatory to fulfil duties towards Allah, it is also essential to fulfil duties towards other people, especially relatives. In fact doing one's duty towards them is part of doing one's duty to Allah, that Allah has enjoined.

Think about how this soorah begins with the command to fear Allah and be mindful of ties of kinship and spouses in general. Then after that, these factors are explained fully, in detail, from the

beginning of the soorah to the end. It is as if the entire soorah focuses on these issues, as it goes on to explain in detail and clarify what is mentioned in brief here.

The words ﴿and from it created its mate﴾ emphasise paying attention to the rights of husbands and wives, and fulfilling them, because wives are created from husbands, so the closest connections, ties and relationships exist between them.



﴿وَمَا اتَّوَا إِلَيْنَا أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا تَبَدَّلُوا الْخَيْرَ بِالْطَّيِّبِ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢)

- 4:2. Give orphans their property, and do not exchange the bad for the good, nor consume their wealth by mixing it with your own, for this is indeed a great sin.

This is the first issue with regard to the rights of people in this soorah. This refers to orphans who have lost their fathers, who had been taking care of them, when they are still small and vulnerable, unable to take care of themselves. So the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful enjoined His slaves to treat orphans well and not to come near their wealth except in the best manner, and to give their wealth back to them when they reach adulthood and become mature.

Also, He instructed them not to ﴿exchange the bad﴾, which refers to consuming the orphan's wealth unlawfully ﴿for the good﴾, which refers to that which is permissible and with which there is nothing wrong

﴿nor consume their wealth by mixing it with your own﴾.

This verse highlights the abhorrent nature of consuming their wealth in this case, when the provision that Allah has granted him

should mean that there is no need to take their wealth. Whoever transgresses the limits in this case has committed «a great sin» that is, a grievous sin. Another type of exchanging bad for good is when the guardian takes what is precious from the orphan's wealth and replaces it with what is inferior of his own wealth. This verse proves the validity of guardianship over orphans, because the implication of giving orphans their wealth is that the one who gives them their property is their guardian. It also instructs guardians to take proper care of orphans' property, because giving him his wealth properly requires taking care of it and doing that which will keep it safe and make it grow, and not exposing it to danger.



﴿وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ ۚ أَلَّا تَعْلَمُوا ۚ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٤)

(٤-٣)

- 4:3. If you fear that you will not be able to deal fairly with orphan girls, you may marry other women who seem good to you, two or three or four; but if you fear that you will not be equitable, then marry only one, or any slave-girls you may own. That is more likely to keep you from committing an injustice.
- 4:4. And give the women [on marriage] their dowry graciously; but if they, of their own accord, choose to give up to you a part of it, you may enjoy it with a clear conscience.

That is, if you fear that you will not be fair or just to female orphans who are under your guardianship and care, and you fear that you will not fulfil their rights because you do not feel attracted

to them, then choose from among other women, and marry «other women who seem good to you» that is, those whom you choose of women who are religiously committed, wealthy, beautiful, of good lineage or good social standing, and other qualities that make them desirable for marriage, so choose as you see fit.

Out of all these qualities, the best you can choose is the quality of religious commitment, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Women may be married for four things: their wealth, their lineage, their beauty and their religious commitment. Choose the one who is religiously-committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (that is, may you prosper).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

This verse indicates that the man should find out about the woman he wants to marry; indeed it is permissible for him to look at the one he wants to marry, so that he will choose one he thinks is suitable for him and he will be certain that he likes her.

Then Allah states the number of women whom it is permissible to marry: «two or three or four» that is, whoever wants to take two wives may do so, and if he wants to take three or four, he may do so, but no more than that, according to scholarly consensus.

That is because a man's desire may not be satisfied with just one wife, so it is permitted for him to take one after another, until he reaches four, because four is enough for anyone, except in rare cases. However, that is only permitted on condition that he is certain that he will be able to avoid injustice and mistreatment and he is confident that he will be able to give them their rights.

But if he fears that he will not be able to be fair and just in any way, then he must limit it to one, or to slave women, because he is not obliged to give equal shares to slave women.

«That» namely limiting it to one wife or to slave women «is more likely to keep you from committing an injustice» that is, being unfair to any of them.

This indicates that for a person to put himself in a situation in which he fears that he may be unjust or unfair, or not carry out his duties – even if it is permissible in principle – is not appropriate; rather he must err on the side of caution and protect his religious commitment, because keeping his religious commitment intact is for the best.

Because many men mistreat women and deny them their rights – especially the *mahr* or dowry, which is usually a large amount that is paid in one go, therefore the husband may find it difficult to give it to the wife – here Allah commands and urges men to give wives ﴿their dowry﴾ or *mahr* ﴿graciously﴾ that is, with goodwill and with peace of mind, and not to delay it or deduct anything from it. This indicates that the *mahr* is to be given to the woman if she has reached the age of accountability, and that it becomes her property as soon as a marriage contract is done, because it is described as belonging to the woman (﴿their [that is, women's] dowry﴾), which implies that it is their property.

﴿but if they, of their own accord, choose to give up to you a part of it﴾ that is, of the dowry. What is meant is: if they give it up to you willingly and by their own choice, by waiving part of it, or accepting delays or substitutions ﴿you may enjoy it with a clear conscience﴾ that is, there is no blame on you for that, and there are no consequences.

This indicates that the woman has the right to dispose of her wealth, even by giving it freely, if she is mature. If she is not mature, then her giving it is not valid. We also learn that her guardian is not entitled to any part of her dowry, unless she gives it willingly.

The words ﴿you may marry other women, who seem good to you﴾ indicate that marriage to bad women is not enjoined; in fact it is forbidden, such as polytheist women or immoral women, as Allah says elsewhere:

«Do not marry the polytheist women until they believe...» (al-Baqarah 2: 221)

«...and a woman who fornicates may only marry a man who fornicates or who is a polytheist...» (an-Noor 24: 3)



﴿وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ فِيهَا أَرْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا

مَعْرُوفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥)

- 4:5. Do not entrust your property to the feeble-minded, which Allah has made a means of support for you, but feed and clothe them from it, and speak to them with kind words.

The word translated here as «feeble-minded» refers to one who does not dispose of wealth in the proper manner either because he is lacking in mental capacity, such as one who is insane or has an intellectual disability, or because he is not mature, such as minors and those who are reckless. Allah forbids the guardians to give them their wealth, lest they spoil it or waste it, because Allah has made wealth a means of support for His slaves, to serve their religious and worldly interests, but these people cannot look after it properly or protect it.

So He instructs guardians not to give it to them; rather they should feed and clothe them from it and spend from it on their necessities and things they need for their spiritual and physical well-being, and they should speak kind words to them by promising them – if they ask for it – that they will give it to them after they reach the age of maturity and the like. And they should speak kindly to them so that they will feel reassured.

The fact that Allah (ﷻ) attributes the wealth to the guardians («your property») indicates that they must handle the property of these

feeble-minded or immature ones as they handle their own property, by protecting it, disposing of it properly and not exposing it to danger.

This verse indicates that expenses for the maintenance of the insane, minors and the feeble-minded should come from their own wealth, if they have any wealth, because Allah says: ﴿but feed and clothe them from it﴾. This indicates that the word of the guardian is acceptable in whatever claims he makes of having spent on their maintenance and clothing, if it sounds plausible, because Allah has entrusted him with their wealth, and the word of the trustee must be accepted.



﴿وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٦)

- 4:6. Test the orphans until they reach a marriageable age. Then, if you find that they have sound judgement, hand over their property to them. Do not consume it unlawfully or hastily before they come of age [and demand it]. If the guardian is well-off, let him abstain entirely [from the orphan's property], but if he is poor, let him consume thereof according to what is reasonable. When you hand over their property to them, call in witnesses. And Allah is sufficient in taking account.

Testing is done by giving the orphan who is approaching maturity and is expected to be of sound judgement a small amount of his wealth, to see if he handles it properly as befits his situation; thus it will become clear whether he is of sound judgement or foolish. If he

continues to mishandle it, then his wealth is not to be handed over to him even if he grows very old, because he is persisting in foolishness.

If it becomes clear that he is of sound judgement and fit to handle his own wealth, and he has reached a marriageable age, «hand over their property to them» in full.

«Do not consume it unlawfully» that is, by overstepping the mark of what is permissible, namely what Allah has permitted to you of your own wealth, and transgressing upon that which Allah has forbidden to you of their wealth.

«or hastily before they come of age [and demand it]» that is, do not consume it when they are small and unable to take it from you or prevent you from consuming it, rushing to do that before they grow up and become able to take it from you or keep you away from it. This is something that actually happens a great deal on the part of guardians who do not fear Allah and do not have any compassion or love for the orphans under their care; they regard this situation as an opportunity, so they take advantage of it and hasten to do that which Allah has forbidden to them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) forbids such actions in this particular case.



﴿لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧)

- 4:7. Men have a share in what parents and relatives leave behind, and women have a share in what parents and relatives leave behind, whether it be little or much; this is ordained [by Allah].

During the jāhiliyah, because of their cruelty and hardheartedness, the Arabs did not permit the weak, such as women and children, to inherit and they made inheritance for strong men only, because

such men – according to their way of thinking – were people of war and fighting who could plunder and seize booty. But the Most Wise, Most Merciful Lord wanted to ordain laws for His slaves in which men and women, strong and weak, would be equal. As a precursor to that, He revealed general principles so that they could get used to the idea, then the details came after the general principle had become established, people were prepared to receive it and they would feel no resentment such as might have stemmed from these abhorrent customs. Hence Allah said:

﴿Men have a share﴾ that is, a portion
 ﴿in what parents﴾ that is, mothers and fathers ﴿and relatives﴾ in general ﴿leave behind, and women have a share in what parents and relatives leave behind﴾.

It is as if there was a question: is this share to be based on custom and tradition, and may they give them whatever they want to give, or is it something of a specified amount? Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿this is ordained [by Allah]﴾ that is, the All-Knowing, Most Wise has ordained it, and we will discuss the size of the portions below, in shâ' Allâh.

Moreover, there may be another misconception, which is that women and children have no share except in cases where the wealth is abundant, so Allah dispelled that notion by saying: ﴿whether it be little or much﴾. Blessed be Allah, the best prescriber of laws.



﴿وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨)

- 4:8. But if at the time of division [other] relatives, or orphans or those in need, are present, give them something from it, and speak to them with kind words.

This is a beautiful and sublime teaching, and a kind gesture. Allah says: «But if at the time of division» that is, division of the estate «[other] relatives» who are not designated heirs «or orphans or those in need» that is, deserving cases among the poor «are present, give them something from it» that is, give them something that you can afford from this wealth that has come to you without any effort or trouble on your part, for they are eager to have something of it, so give them something, as a kind gesture, in such a way that will not affect you yet will benefit them.

From this we learn that if anyone shows interest or hopes for some of that which you have in front of you, you should give him something of it, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If the servant of one of you brings him his food, let him make him sit with him, and if he does not make him sit with him, then let him give him a morsel or two.» (Bukhari)

When the first fruits of their trees appeared, the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) would bring it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for him to pray for blessing for it; he would look for the youngest child present, and give it to him, knowing that he was most eager to have it. All of this applies if it is possible to give something; if that is not possible, because there are others who are more deserving of it, then let them say to them «kind words» and turn them away gently, by saying something kind, not insulting or offensive.



﴿وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَافًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۝٩ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا ۝١٠﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩-١٠)

- 4:9. And let those be careful who, if they were to leave behind vulnerable children, would be concerned for them; let them fear Allah and say what is appropriate.
- 4:10. Verily, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly take nothing into their bellies but fire. Soon they will burn in a raging fire.

It was said that this is addressed to those who are present when a person is dying; if he shows some unfairness in his bequests, they should tell him to be just and fair in his bequests, based on the words: ﴿let [them]...say what is appropriate﴾ that is, what is in accordance with fairness and what is right. So they should advise the one who wants to make a bequest to minimise it out of compassion for his own children (so that there will be more wealth left for them); their advice should be based on what they would want for their own children after they are gone.

According to other commentators, this is addressed to the guardians of those who are feeble-minded, such as the insane, minors and those who are poor in judgement; they should treat them with regard to their religious and worldly affairs in the way they would like those who come after them to treat their own vulnerable children, ﴿let them fear Allah﴾ in their guardianship of others; in other words, let them treat them in a manner that reflects fear of Allah, without humiliating them, and let them take care of them and raise them to fear Allah.

When He enjoined that upon them, He warned them not to devour the wealth of orphans, and promised a severe punishment for doing so: ﴿Verily, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly﴾ that is, unlawfully; this excludes what is mentioned above, about it being permissible for one who is poor to consume it in accordance with what is reasonable, and its being permissible to mix their food with the orphans' food.

But those who devour it unjustly «take nothing into their bellies but fire» that is, what they are devouring is fire that is raging inside them, and they are the ones who put it in their own bellies.

«Soon they will burn in a raging fire» that is, a fire that is stoked and burning fiercely. This is the most severe warning that is mentioned concerning sins, which is indicative of how abhorrent and terrible devouring orphans' wealth is, and that it deserves admittance to hell. This indicates that it is one of the worst of major sins. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.



﴿يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلَّذِ كَرِ مِنْهُ حَظٌّ الْأُنثَىٰ بِنِسَاءِ فَوْقَ
 اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ
 مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ
 فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ؕ أَبَاؤُكُمْ
 وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا
 حَكِيمًا ﴿١١﴾ وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُن لَّهُنَّ
 وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ
 يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُن لَكُمْ
 وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ
 تُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةً وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ
 أُخْتُ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ
 فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَاعَافٍ وَصِيَّةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١١-١٢)

- 4:11. Allah instructs you concerning [the inheritance of] your children: to the male, a portion equal to that of two females; if there are only daughters, more than two, their share is two-thirds of the estate; if there is only one [daughter], her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the estate goes to each, if the deceased left children; if [he left] no children, and the parents are the [only] heirs, the mother has a third, but if the deceased left siblings, the mother has a sixth. [The distribution in all cases is] after the payment of bequests and debts. With regard to your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is going to benefit you more. [These fixed shares] are ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.
- 4:12. Your share of your wives' estate is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave a child, you have a fourth, after payment of bequests and debts. Their share of your estate is a fourth, if you leave no child; but if you leave a child, they have an eighth of the estate, after payment of bequests and debts. If a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two has a sixth; but if they are more than two, they share in a third, after payment of bequests and debts, without prejudice to the rights of the heirs. This is an instruction from Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

These verses, and the verse at the end of the soorah, are the verses that discuss the division of the estate. They – along with the hadith of 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs that is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhârî*:

«Give the fixed shares (of inheritance) to those who are entitled to them, and whatever is left over goes to the closest male relative (on the father's side).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

– include most of the rulings on the fixed shares of inheritance, if not all of them, as we shall see below, apart from the shares of grandmothers, which are not mentioned in these texts.

But it is proven in *as-Sunan* from al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah and Muhammad ibn Maslamah that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the grandmother one-sixth and, moreover, there is scholarly consensus on this point.

﴿Allah instructs you concerning [the inheritance of] your children﴾ that is, your children – O parents – are entrusted to you and Allah has instructed you to look after them, take care of their affairs both spiritual and worldly, teach them, discipline them, restrain them from committing evil, and enjoin them to obey Allah and to fear Him at all times, as He says elsewhere:

﴿O you who believe, guard yourselves and your families against a fire whose fuel is men and stones...﴾ (at-Tahreem 66: 6)

So children are entrusted to the care of their parents, who either fulfil the obligations of this trust, in which case they will have a great reward, or they neglect it, in which case they deserve warning and punishment. This indicates that Allah (ﷻ) is more merciful to His slaves than parents, as He instructed parents – even though they are compassionate towards their children – to take care of them.

Then Allah describes the manner in which they inherit, as He says: ﴿to the male, a portion equal to that of two females﴾. This refers to the deceased's own children, and the children of his son; the son has a portion or share equal to that of two females, if there is no other heir who is entitled to a fixed share; whatever is left after giving to others who are entitled to a fixed share is also given to the children and divided in the same manner.

The scholars are unanimously agreed on that, and that if the deceased has children, the inheritance goes to them, and the children of a son do not get anything when there are children of the deceased, male or female; this applies when there are both males and females. There are also two other scenarios: when there are only males, which we will discuss below, and when there are only females, which is mentioned here:

﴿if there are only daughters, more than two﴾ that is, daughters of the deceased or daughters of his son, three or more
 ﴿their share is two-thirds of the estate; if there is only one [daughter]﴾ that is, a daughter or the daughter of a son
 ﴿her share is a half﴾. There is scholarly consensus on this point.

But it remains to be asked: Where do we get the ruling that if there are two daughters, they may take two-thirds, as there is consensus on this point?

The answer is that we learn it from the words ﴿if there is only one [daughter], her share is a half﴾. This implies that if there is more than one daughter, the fixed share will change from one half, and there is nothing more than one half except two-thirds.

Moreover, the words ﴿to the male, a portion equal to that of two females﴾ mean that if he leaves behind a son and a daughter, then the son gets the two-thirds. Allah has told us that he gets the share of two females, which indicates that two daughters get two-thirds. Moreover, if the daughter takes one-third alongside her brother, when he affects her share more than her sister, then her taking it (one-third), when her sister is with her, is more appropriate or more expected. Furthermore, the words of Allah concerning two sisters: ﴿If there are two sisters [or more], they will have two-thirds of the estate [between them]﴾ (4: 176) is a statement about two sisters. If two sisters – even though they are not as closely related as daughters – take two-thirds, then it is more appropriate that two daughters – who are more closely related – should take two-thirds. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave two-thirds to the two daughters of Sa'd, as it says in *as-Saheeh*.

It remains to be asked: What is the point of the phrase ﴿more than two﴾?

The answer is that the point – and Allah knows best – is so that it may be known that the fixed share, which is two-thirds, does not increase if the number of daughters is greater than two; rather it is fixed for two or more daughters.

The verse indicates that if there is one daughter and a daughter of a son or daughters of a son, then the daughter gets half; what is then left of the two-thirds ordained by Allah for daughters or son's daughters is one-sixth, which is to be given to the son's daughter or daughters. Hence this one-sixth is called the completion of the two-thirds. A similar scenario is applicable to one daughter of a son with granddaughters of a son, who are more distantly related to the deceased.

This verse also indicates that once a daughter or son's daughter has taken the two-thirds of the estate, those who are further down the line of descent of the son's daughters (or granddaughters) do not get anything, because Allah only allocated two-thirds to them and it has been taken already. If they were not excluded from inheritance, that would mean that this group would take more than two-thirds, which is contrary to the text. There is consensus among the scholars on all of these rulings, praise be to Allah.

The words «of the estate» (*lit.* of what he leaves behind) indicate that the heirs inherit everything that the deceased left behind of property, furniture, gold, silver, and so on, including even the *diyah* that only becomes due after his death and even debts that are owed to him.

Then Allah mentions the parents' share of inheritance: «For parents» that is, his father and mother «a sixth share of the estate goes to each, if the deceased left children» – this refers to his own children or his son's children, whether they are male or female, one or several. The mother gets no more than one-sixth if there are any children. In the case of the father, if there are male children, he cannot take more than one-sixth; if the children are female, one or more, and there is nothing left after dividing the estate according to fixed shares – such as those of parents and two daughters – there will be nothing left to be given to the closest male relative. But if there is anything left after the fixed shares of the

daughter or daughters have been given, then the father will receive his fixed share of one-sixth, and what is left over also goes to the father, because he is the closest male relative; we have given the fixed shares to all those who are entitled to them, so what is left goes to the closest male relative, and the father is closer than a brother or paternal uncle and the like.

«if [he left] no children, and the parents are the [only] heirs, the mother has a third» that is, and the remainder goes to the father, because the only heirs are the parents, and the mother's share is stated (as one-third), which implies that the remainder goes to the father.

Hence it is known that if there are no children, the father has no fixed share; rather, on the basis of being the closest male relative, he inherits all the wealth, or whatever is left after the fixed shares have been allocated. But if there is a spouse as well as parents, then the husband or wife takes his or her fixed share, the mother takes one-third of what is left, and the rest goes to the father.

This is indicated by the words of Allah: «...and the parents are the [only] heirs, the mother has a third» that is, one-third of what the parents inherit. This occurs in the following two scenarios: either one-sixth if there is a husband, mother and father; or one-fourth if there is a wife, mother and father. The verse does not indicate that the mother inherits one-third of the entire estate when there are no children, so there is no need to say that these two scenarios are an exception.

This may be explained by noting that the share taken by the husband or wife is similar to that which is taken by creditors, thus it should come from the entire estate (before it is divided), and what is left is to be shared between the parents.

Moreover, if we give the mother one-third of the wealth (before giving the fixed share to the spouse) that will lead to her taking more than the father if it is the husband (of the deceased) who is still alive, or the father would take more than half of the one-sixth of the

mother, if it is the wife (of the deceased) who is still alive. But there is no reference to this type of scenario, because the regular scenario is either that the mother takes a share equal to that of the father, or the father takes double what the mother takes.

«if the deceased left siblings, the mother has a sixth». This refers to full siblings or siblings through the father or through the mother, whether they are male or female, heirs (with a fixed share) or blocked (from inheriting) by the presence of the father or grandfather. But it may be said that it does not appear from the phrase «if the deceased left siblings» that this includes those who have no rights to a fixed share of inheritance. Therefore the presence of the siblings should not reduce the mother's share (from one-third to one-sixth) unless the siblings have the right to a fixed share. This is supported by the argument that they would reduce her share from one-third (to one-sixth), so that there will be some wealth available for them. And Allah knows best.

However, this applies provided that they are two or more. But some may find that problematic, on the basis that the word *ikhwah* (siblings) is used, which is the plural form. The response to that is that what is meant is having more than one.

Based on that, if he leaves behind a mother, a father and siblings, the mother receives one-sixth and the rest goes to the father. Thus the siblings reduce the mother's share from one-third (to one-sixth), despite the fact that the father blocks them from having any share (except in the other possible interpretation, in which the mother receives one-third and the rest goes to the father).

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: «[The distribution in all cases is] after the payment of bequests and debts». That is, these fixed shares of inheritance become due and are to be distributed after paying off any debts that the deceased owed to Allah (such as zakâh) or to other people, and after fulfilling any bequests that the deceased had made before he died. After that, whatever is left is the estate to which the heirs are entitled.

The bequest comes first, even though it is not as important as debt, in order to highlight its importance, because fulfilling bequests may be difficult for the heirs; otherwise, debts take precedence over bequests and must be paid from the estate (before the fixed shares are allocated).

The bequest is only valid with regard to one-third or less of the estate, if it is given to a non-relative who is not an heir. Otherwise, if it is more than that, the bequest cannot be executed except with approval from all the heirs.

«With regard to your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is going to benefit you more». If dividing the estate were left to be worked out according to your reasoning and choice, it would result in harm, of which only Allah knows the extent, because people are lacking in reason and do not know what is best and more appropriate at any time or in any place. No person knows which, out of their children and their parents, will be more beneficial to them and more helpful in attaining their aims, both religious and worldly.

«[These fixed shares] are ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise» that is, they have been enjoined by Allah, Whose knowledge encompasses all things, Whose prescription of laws and regulations is precise and perfect, and whatever He decrees, He decrees it in the best way, and human minds cannot produce anything close to His sound rulings and regulations that are suitable for all times, places and situations.

«Your share», O husbands, «of your wives' estate is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave a child, you have a fourth, after payment of bequests and debts. Their share of your estate is a fourth, if you leave no child; but if you leave a child, they have an eighth of the estate, after payment of bequests and debts»

included under the same heading as a son or child, whose presence or absence affects the ruling, are her (the deceased wife's) own children or the children, whether male or female, one or more, of her son from

this husband or from a previous husband. The children of daughters are excluded from this, according to scholarly consensus.

«If a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister» that is, through the mother, as it appears in some modes of recitation. The scholars are unanimously agreed that what is meant by siblings here is siblings through the mother. If the deceased left neither ascendants nor descendants, that is he left no parent or child, no father or grandfather, no son, no son's son, no daughter, no son's daughter, no matter how far the line of descent reaches, this is called *kalâlah* (the case in which the deceased leaves neither ascendants nor descendants). This is how it was explained by Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه), and there is scholarly agreement on this point, praise be to Allah.

«each one of the two» that is, of the brother and sister «has a sixth».

«but if they are more than two, they share in a third» that is, they do not get any more than one-third, even if they are more than two. The words «they share in a third» indicate that both male and females get equal shares in this case, because the word translated here as «share» indicates equal shares.

The word *kalâlah*, paraphrased here as «[leaving] neither ascendants nor descendants» refers to descendants, no matter how far the line of descent extends, and male ascendants, no matter how far the line of ascent extends. They cancel the share of siblings through the mother, because Allah did not give the latter a share of inheritance except in the case of *kalâlah*; were it not for *kalâlah*, they would not inherit anything at all, according to scholarly consensus.

The words «they share in a third» indicate that full siblings have no allocated share in the case where there is a husband, mother, siblings through the mother and full siblings. The husband receives half, the mother receives one-sixth, and the siblings through the mother receive (the remaining) third; in this case the full siblings do not receive

anything, because Allah allocated one-third to the siblings through the mother. If the full siblings had a share, that would include something that Allah did not include in His ruling. Moreover, the siblings through the mother have a fixed share, whereas full siblings would inherit (what is left after distribution of the fixed shares) on the basis of being male relatives through the father.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Give the fixed shares to those to whom they are due, and whatever is left should go to the closest male relative.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Those to whom fixed shares are due are those whose shares were allocated by Allah, and in this case (mentioned above – *kalâlah*), there is nothing left after the fixed shares have been distributed. Therefore the full siblings do not receive anything. This is the correct view concerning this matter.

With regard to the inheritance of siblings, full sisters or sisters through the father, that is mentioned in the verse in which Allah says: ﴿They ask you for a ruling. Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning those who die leaving neither ascendants nor descendants﴾ (4: 176).

If there is (only) one sister, whether she is a full sister or a sister through the father, she receives half of the estate; if there are (only) two sisters, they receive two-thirds. If there is one full sister with a sister or sisters through the father, she (the full sister) receives half and the rest of the two-thirds goes to the sister or sisters through the father. This is the one-sixth that completes the two-thirds. If the full sisters took all of the two-thirds, then the sisters through the father do not receive anything, as was stated above in the case of daughters and son's daughters. If the siblings are both men and women, then the males each receive a portion or share equal to that of two females.

If it is asked: Can we work out from the Qur'an the ruling on the inheritance of a killer, a slave, a relative who follows a different religion, a partially manumitted slave, a hermaphrodite, a grandfather

in the presence of siblings from a different mother, *al-'awl* (where the sum of fixed shares exceeds one hundred per cent and there is a shortfall), *ar-radd* (where the sum of fixed shares is less than one hundred per cent and there is something left over), *dhuwil arhām* (distant relatives), other relatives, sisters from a different mother in the presence of daughters or son's daughter, or not?

The answer is: Yes, all of the cases mentioned are referred to in an implicit and subtle manner, which may be difficult to understand except for the one who examines the matter thoroughly. In the case of the killer and a relative who follows a different religion, it is known that they do not inherit, because Allah has already explained that the distribution of wealth to the heirs is based on the closeness of blood ties and how beneficial they are in religious and worldly terms.

Allah (ﷻ) refers to this wisdom in the words: ﴿you do not know which of them is going to benefit you more﴾ (4: 11). It is known that the killer has caused the greatest harm to the one from whom he would have inherited, so the reason for him to inherit cannot be compared to the harm caused by killing, which is opposite to the benefit which is the reason for inheritance. Thus it is known that killing is the greatest impediment to inheritance and it is a severing of the ties of kinship of which Allah says:

﴿...And kindred by blood are nearer to one another [regarding inheritance], according to the decree ordained by Allah...﴾ (*al-Aḥzāb* 33: 6)

Although this is an established principle of Sharia, the one who tries to expedite something before its time is punished by being deprived of it.

Similarly, we may conclude that the one who is of a different religion to the deceased does not inherit from him, because there is an impediment to the reason for inheritance. Ties of blood dictate inheritance, but the impediment of the difference in religion dictates that all ties that would strengthen this impediment be severed. Thus

the reason for inheritance, namely blood ties, is rendered invalid because of this impediment. This is explained by the fact that Allah (ﷻ) has ordained that the rights of Muslims take priority over the worldly rights of relatives who are disbelievers. If a Muslim dies, his wealth is transferred to those who are closest to him and most entitled to it. The words of Allah, ﴿And kindred by blood are nearer to one another [regarding inheritance], according to the decree ordained by Allah﴾, are applicable if they have the same religion, but if they are of different religions, then the brotherhood of faith takes precedence over the brotherhood of blood.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in *Jalā' al-Afhām*:

Think about this meaning of the verse of inheritance, in which Allah made mutual inheritance conditional upon the word wife [*zawjah*], not woman [*imra'ah*, which may also mean wife], as He said: ﴿Your share of your wives' estate is a half﴾ (4: 12), to indicate that this mutual inheritance is only because of being spouses, which is indicative of similarities and of one being part of the other. But there is no similarity between the believer and the disbeliever, and the one cannot be part of the other. Therefore there is no inheritance between them. The subtle meanings of the words and phrases of the Qur'an are above the comprehension of humankind.

In the case of the slave, he does not inherit and he cannot be inherited from. With regard to his not being inherited from, this is clear, because he does not own anything that could be inherited from him; rather everything he owns belongs to his master. With regard to his not inheriting, that is because he cannot own anything; all that he owns belongs to his master, and he is not related to the deceased. Thus we conclude that the words of Allah, ﴿to the male, a portion equal to that of two females﴾, ﴿Your share of your wives' estate is a half﴾, ﴿each one of the two has a sixth﴾ and so on, apply only to those who may own property. The slave, however, cannot own anything, thus it is known that he cannot inherit anything.

As for the slave who is partially manumitted, the rulings concerning him are applied partially; to the extent that he is free, he is entitled to what Allah has allocated to him of inheritance, because he may own property commensurate with the degree to which he has been manumitted, whilst the proportion that is still enslaved does not come under that ruling. So the partially manumitted slave may inherit or be inherited from, and his presence may block others from inheriting, commensurate with the extent to which he is free.

With regard to the hermaphrodite, he must be either clearly masculine or feminine, or ambiguous. If he is clearly of one gender or the other, then the matter is clear.

If male, then he comes under the same ruling as males and the text that speaks of males applies to him. If female, then she comes under the same rulings as females, and the text that speaks of females applies to her.

If ambiguous, then in cases where there is no difference in inheritance between males and females – as in the case of siblings through the mother – then the matter is clear.

In cases where the share of inheritance differs according to gender, and we have no way of knowing that, we cannot give him the higher share, because of the possibility that that may lead to injustice to the other heirs, but we cannot give him the lower share either, because of the possibility that that may lead to injustice to him. So we must follow a middle path between the two, and do what is most just, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Be just; that is nearer to true piety...﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 8)

– and there is no way we can be just in this case except by following what is suggested above, which is to adopt a middle path.

﴿Allah does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 286)

﴿So fear Allah as best you can...﴾ (*at-Taghābun* 64: 16)

With regard to the inheritance of the grandfather when there are also full siblings or siblings through the father, do they inherit as well as him or not? The Book of Allah supports the opinion of Abu Bakr aş-Şiddeeq (رضي الله عنه), that the grandfather blocks the full siblings or siblings through the father or mother, just as the father does.

The reason for that is that the grandfather is referred to as a father in many places in the Qur'an, such as the following:

﴿Or were you present when death came to Ya'qoob? He said to his sons: What will you worship after I am gone? They said: We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, of Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel and Is-hâq...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 133)

Yoosuf (عليه السلام) said:

﴿I follow the religion of my fathers, of Ibrâheem, Is-hâq and Ya'qoob...﴾ (Yoosuf 12: 38)

Thus we see that Allah described the grandfather and the father's grandfather as a father, which indicates that the grandfather is of the same status as the father; he inherits what the father inherits and he blocks those whom the father blocks.

As the scholars are unanimously agreed that the grandfather comes under the same rulings as the father when the father is not alive, and takes his share of inheritance alongside the children and others, such as the children of siblings (nephews and nieces), paternal uncles and their children, and other rulings of inheritance, he should also come under the same rulings with regard to blocking siblings from a different mother.

As the son's son is of the same status as the deceased's own son, why should the grandfather not be of the same status as the father? If there is a grandfather of the father as well as the son of a brother, then the scholars are unanimously agreed that the grandfather blocks the nephew, so why should the grandfather of the deceased not block his brother? Those scholars who allocate a share of inheritance to

siblings when the grandfather is present have no text to support their view, and no indication, hint or sound analogy.

With regard to the issue of al-‘awl (where the sum of fixed shares exceeds one hundred per cent and there is a shortfall), the ruling is referred to in the Qur’an. Allah (ﷻ) has allocated fixed shares to those who are entitled to inherit, which leads to one of two scenarios: either some of them block others, or they do not.

If some of them block others, those who are blocked are dismissed and are not entitled to anything. If they do not block one another, then either the fixed shares will not use up all of the estate (and there will be something left over), or they will use it all up without anything being left over or any shortfall, or the sum of the fixed shares will be greater than the estate. In the first two cases, each heir will be able to take his fixed share in full, but in the last case – in which the sum of the fixed shares is greater than the estate – there will be two possible solutions:

In the first possible solution, some of the fixed shares that have been ordained by Allah will be reduced, whilst others receive their shares in full, which is an action for which there is no evidence, and it is not appropriate to give some less than their fixed share but not others. Therefore there is only the second option, which is to give each one as close to his allocated share as possible, and we must work out a way of making the loss of each heir commensurate with his or her share of the inheritance, as is done with debts owed to lenders, if the total debt is greater than the debtor’s wealth. There is no way to do that except through al-‘awl; thus it is known that Allah has explained al-‘awl in the fixed shares of inheritance in His Book.

The exact opposite of this scenario is called ar-radd (where the sum of fixed shares is less than one hundred per cent and there is something left over). If the fixed shares do not use up the entire estate, and there is something left over to which no relatives on the father’s side, whether closely or distantly related, are entitled, there

is no evidence to support giving it to one of the heirs, and giving it to someone else who is not related to the deceased is unjust and unfair, and is contrary to the words of Allah:

﴿...But kindred by blood are nearer to one another [regarding inheritance] according to the decree ordained by Allah...﴾ (*al-Anfāl* 8: 75)

Therefore the only option is to share out the surplus among the heirs who are entitled to fixed shares, commensurate with the share of each one.

Therefore, because the relationship between the spouses is not one of blood ties, they are not entitled to the extra portion commensurate with their fixed share. This is according to those scholars who say that spouses do not inherit from anything that is left over after the fixed shares of inheritance have been distributed; they are the majority of those who say that what is left over is to be divided among the heirs (*ar-radd*). Based on that, the guideline for dividing the surplus is that the one who is entitled to a fixed share is a relative. According to the other view, spouses are like others who are entitled to fixed shares, thus they have the right to a portion of what is left over of the estate. As their share is decreased when there is a shortfall (*al-‘awl*), it should be increased when there is a surplus, like that of others. The reason, according to this view, is that (the spouse) is an heir who is entitled to a fixed share, (therefore he is also entitled to a share of the surplus). This is the correct view as indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah, and by sound analogy. And Allah knows best.

Similarly, we also learn about the inheritance of *dhawil-arḥâm* (distant relatives). If the deceased did not leave behind anyone who is entitled to a fixed share, or any relatives on his father's side, then either his wealth will go to the *bayt al-mâl* (treasury of the Islamic state), to the benefit of non-relatives, or his wealth will go to those relatives who are connected to those who would have been entitled

to fixed shares if they were still alive. This is indicated by the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...But kindred by blood are nearer to one another [regarding inheritance] according to the decree ordained by Allah...﴾ (*al-Anfāl* 8: 75)

Giving it to people other than them in this case is depriving those who are more entitled than others; thus we learn that dhawil-arḥām may inherit.

Even though it is known that they may inherit, we know that they have no fixed share that is allocated to them in the Book of Allah, and that there are intermediaries between them and the deceased, because of whom they become relatives; hence they take the place of those through whom they are connected to the deceased. And Allah knows best.

With regard to giving what is left to relatives on the father's side, such as sons, brothers and their sons, and paternal uncles and their sons, and so on, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Give the fixed shares to those who are entitled to them, and whatever is left over goes to the closest male relatives.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We have appointed heirs for everything that parents and close relatives leave behind﴾ (4: 33).

So if we have given the fixed shares to those who are entitled to them, and there is nothing left, the relatives on the father's side are not entitled to anything; if there is anything left, then it goes to the closest relatives on the father's side, depending on the type and level of relationship.

There are five types of connection on the father's side: sons, then fathers (including grandfathers), then brothers and their sons, then paternal uncles and their sons, then freed slaves (of the deceased). Priority should be given to the most closely related. If they are all of

the same degree, then it goes to the one with the strongest connection, which is the full brother. If they are all equal in that regard, then they share it. And Allah knows best.

As far as sisters from a different mother are concerned, alongside daughters (of the deceased) or daughters of the son (of the deceased), with regard to the fact that they may be treated like male relatives on the father's side and may take what is left after the fixed shares are distributed, that is because there is nothing in the Qur'an to indicate that sisters should be blocked by the presence of daughters.

As that is the case, if there is anything left after the daughters have taken their fixed shares, then what is left is to be given to the sisters, and should not be given to any relatives on the father's side who are more distantly related than them, such as a brother's son or paternal uncle, or anyone who is even more distantly related than that. And Allah knows best.



﴿تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَعُصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣-١٤)

- 4:13. These are the limits [set by] Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, [Allah] will admit him to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever, and that will be the supreme triumph.
- 4:14. But whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, [Allah] will admit him to a fire, to abide therein forever. And his will be a humiliating punishment.

The details that have been mentioned concerning inheritance are the limits of Allah that must be adhered to; we must not transgress them or fall short of them. This indicates that bequests to heirs are abrogated, as Allah (ﷻ) has decreed the fixed shares of the heirs.

«These are the limits [set by] Allah». Therefore bequeathing to an heir more than he is entitled to comes under the heading of this transgression. Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«There is no bequest to an heir.» (Recorded by Aḥmad, Abu Dâwood, at-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Mâjah; according to Aḥmad and at-Tirmidhi, the hadith is reliable)

Then mention is made of obedience versus disobedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) in general terms, which includes adhering to and falling short of the limits set by Allah with regard to the fixed shares of inheritance.

«Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger» by obeying their commands, the most important of which has to do with affirming the oneness of Allah (*tawḥeed*), then other commands of various types, and heeding their prohibitions, the most important of which has to do with associating others with Allah (*shirk*), then other sins of various types

«[Allah] will admit him to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever».

So whoever carries out the commands and heeds the prohibitions will inevitably be admitted to paradise and saved from hell.

«and that will be the supreme triumph» by which he will attain salvation from His wrath and punishment, and will attain His reward and pleasure, and eternal bliss that cannot be described.

«But whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, [Allah] will admit him to a fire, to abide therein forever. And his will be a humiliating punishment». Disobedience includes disbelief and other, lesser sins. Therefore understanding this leaves no

room for the specious argument of the Kharijites, who say that sinners become disbelievers (by virtue of their sin). Allah (ﷻ) has made admittance to paradise conditional upon obedience to Him and to His Messenger (ﷺ), and He has made admittance to hell conditional upon disobedience to Him and His Messenger (ﷺ). Whoever obeys Him completely will enter paradise without being punished, and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) completely, which includes association of others with Him and other, lesser sins, will enter hell and abide therein forever. The one who combines disobedience and obedience will be subject to reward and punishment commensurate with the extent of his obedience and disobedience. The *mutawâtir* texts indicate that those who are obedient with regard to belief in the oneness of Allah will not abide forever in hell, because what they have of belief in His oneness will prevent them abiding therein forever.



﴿وَالَّذِي يَأْتِيكَ الْفَجَسَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّيَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ۝﴾ وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَتَاذُوهُمَا فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٥-١٦)

- 4:15. If any of your women are guilty of immoral conduct, take the evidence of four [reliable] witnesses from amongst you against them, and if they testify, confine them in their homes until death takes them, or Allah ordains for them some [other] way.
- 4:16. If two among you are guilty of [immoral conduct], punish them both. Then if they repent and mend their ways, leave them alone, for Allah is ever Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful.

This refers to women who «are guilty of immoral conduct», namely fornication, which is described as immoral conduct because of its abhorrent nature.

«take the evidence of four [reliable] witnesses from amongst you against them» that is, believing men of good character «and if they testify, confine them in their homes» and prevent them from that type of going out which leads to suspicion; this confinement is also a kind of punishment

«until death takes them» which would be the end of their confinement or detention

«or Allah ordains for them some [other] way» that is, a way other than confinement in their houses. This verse has not been abrogated; rather this was a temporary solution. This is how it was at the beginning of Islam, until Allah ordained another way for them, which is stoning for one who was previously married and flogging for one who was not previously married.

Similarly, «If two among you» men or women, «are guilty of [immoral conduct], punish them both», with harsh words, rebuke, shaming and beating, as a deterrent from such immoral conduct. Based on that, if men are guilty of immoral conduct, they are to be punished, and women who do that are to be confined and punished.

Confinement will end with death, and punishment will end with repentance and mending one's ways. Hence Allah says: «Then if they repent» that is, give up the sins they have committed, regret it and resolve not to do it again

«and mend their ways» by doing things that are indicative of sincere repentance

«leave them alone» and do not punish them

«for Allah is ever Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful» that is, He always accepts the repentance of sinners, and He is extremely merciful and kind; by His kindness He helps them to repent, accepts it from them, and pardons them for what they have done.

From these two verses we understand that proof of fornication must be given by four believing men, and it is more appropriate that they should be of good character, because Allah has ordained strict conditions for proving this immoral action, so as to protect the dignity of His slaves. Hence the testimony of women on their own, or of both men and women, or of less than four men, is not acceptable.

It is also essential that the testimony be delivered clearly, as indicated by the *ṣaḥēḥ* hadiths and as referred to in this verse, where Allah says: ﴿take the evidence of four [reliable] witnesses from amongst you against them﴾. But He did not stop there; rather He said ﴿and if they testify﴾ that is, there must be clear testimony on the part of eyewitnesses, and it should be spoken bluntly, without hints or metaphors.

From these two verses we understand that punishment in the form of harsh words and actions, and confinement, is prescribed by Allah as a disciplinary punishment because of the nature of the sin, so that this punishment may serve as a deterrent.



﴿إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝ وَلَيْسَ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ ۚ أَلَن تَنْزِلَ ۚ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٧-١٨)

- 4:17. Allah only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

- 4:18. But of no avail is the repentance of those who continue to do evil until, when death approaches any one of them, he says: Now I repent, nor [the repentance] of those who die as disbelievers; for them have We prepared a painful punishment.

Allah's mercy to His slaves includes guidance to repent and acceptance thereof after the individual repents. Here He tells us that the repentance that Allah has promised to accept, which is a promise that He took upon Himself out of kindness and generosity on His part, is the repentance of the one who does evil, that is he commits sin ﴿in ignorance﴾, because he is ignorant of the consequences and does not know that it will incur the wrath and punishment of Allah; he is also unaware that Allah is constantly watching him, and he does not know what it leads to of diminishing or erasing faith. Everyone who disobeys Allah is ignorant in this sense, even if he is aware of the prohibition of that sin; in fact awareness of the prohibition is a condition of an action being a sin and punishable.

﴿and repent soon afterwards﴾. This may be understood as meaning: then they repent before death comes to them, for Allah will definitely accept the repentance of His slave if he repents before he sees death and the punishment. However, after death comes, no repentance will be accepted from the sinners and no acknowledgement of the truth will be accepted from the disbelievers, as Allah says:

﴿...until, when he [Pharaoh] was about to drown, he said: I believe that there is no god but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe...﴾
(Yoonus 10: 90)

﴿But when they saw Our punishment, they said: We believe in Allah alone, and we reject that which we used to associate with Him. But their believing after they had seen Our punishment could not benefit them at all. Such has always been the way of Allah in dealing with His slaves...﴾ (Ghāfir 40: 84-85)

Here, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But of no avail is the repentance of those who continue to do evil﴾ that is, sins that are of a lesser degree than disbelief.

﴿until, when death approaches any one of them, he says: Now I repent; nor [the repentance] of those who die as disbelievers; for them have We prepared a painful punishment﴾. That is because, in this case, repentance is due to compulsion, and will not benefit the one who repents. Repentance only benefits the one who repents by choice.

Or it may be that what is meant by the words ﴿and repent soon afterwards﴾ is: soon after committing the sin for which repentance is required. In this case what is meant is: the one who hastens to give up sin as soon as he has committed it, and turns to Allah in repentance, regretting what he has done, Allah will accept his repentance, unlike the one who persists in his sins until sinfulness becomes entrenched in him, then it becomes difficult for him to fulfil the conditions required for complete repentance. Such a person is not usually guided or inspired to repent, and the means that lead to repentance are not usually made available to him, such as the one who does evil despite full and certain knowledge that it is wrong, but he is heedless and does not care that Allah is watching him; in that case he has barred the way of mercy for himself.

Yes, Allah may guide one who persists in committing the sin deliberately, with full awareness of what he is doing, in such a manner that his repentance is acceptable, by means of which Allah will erase his previous sins and offences, but mercy and guidance to repent are more likely in the former case. Hence the first verse ends with the phrase ﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾; part of His knowledge is knowing who is sincere and who is not, and He will requite each of them in the manner he deserves, according to His wisdom. His wisdom also dictates that He should guide those who His wisdom and mercy dictate should be guided to repent, and that He should forsake those

who His mercy and justice dictate should not be guided (to repent).
And Allah knows best.



﴿يَتَّيِّبُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِيَتَذَهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَاتٍ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِيَّاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَنًا وَإِنَّمَا مُبِينًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

﴿٢١﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٩-٢١)

- 4:19. O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, nor to hinder them from marrying others, in order to take away some of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of brazenly immoral conduct; but live with them in kindness. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.
- 4:20. But if you decide to replace one wife with another, even if you had given one of them a heap of gold, do not take the least bit of it back. Would you take it wrongfully and sinfully?
- 4:21. And how could you take it when you have been intimate with one another, and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?

During the jāhiliyah, if a man died and left his wife behind, his relative, such as his brother or cousin and so on, thought that he had more right to claim her than anyone else, and he would keep her away from everyone else whether she liked that or not. If he liked her, he

would marry her for a dowry of whatever amount he wanted, without consulting her, and if he did not like her, he would hinder her from marrying anyone else, and she would not be able to marry anyone except someone whom he chose; he might even refuse to let her get married until she gave him some of his (deceased) relative's estate or some of her (original) dowry. A man would also hinder his wife, if he disliked her, so that he could take back some of that which he had given her. Hence Allah forbade the believers to do any of these things, except in two cases: if she agreed and chose to marry her first husband's relative, as we understand from the phrase «against her will»; or if she was guilty of brazenly immoral conduct, such as fornication, obscene speech or harming her husband. In this case it is permissible for him to hinder her, as a punishment to her for her action, so that she may ransom herself from him if his hindering was justifiable.

«but live with them in kindness». This includes interactions in word and deed. The husband is obliged to live with his wife in kindness, which includes keeping her company in a good manner, not annoying or harming her, and showing kindness and treating her with respect. That also includes maintenance, clothing and so on. The husband is obliged to treat his wife in the manner that is expected of a man of his calibre towards a woman of her calibre, in that particular time and place; this differs from one situation to another.

«If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good» that is, you – O husbands – should keep your wives even if you dislike them, for there is a great deal of good in that, such as obedience to the command of Allah and accepting His advice, which leads to happiness in this world and the hereafter.

So the husband should force himself – even if he does not love her – to strive to develop a good attitude so that he can treat her kindly; perhaps his dislike of her will disappear, to be replaced by love, as

usually happens; or perhaps Allah will bless him with a righteous child from her, who will benefit his (or her) parents in this world and the hereafter. All of that applies if it is possible to keep her without transgressing the limits. Then if there is no option but to separate, and there is no way he can keep her, in that case keeping her is not a must, rather «if you decide to replace one wife with another», that is by divorcing one wife and marrying another, there is no sin and no blame on you for doing that. But even if «you had given one of them» that is, the one you are leaving or the one you are marrying «a heap of gold» that is, a great deal of wealth, «do not take the least bit of it back»; rather give it in full and do not delay payment.

This verse indicates that it is not prohibited to give a large mahr (dowry), even though it is better and more appropriate to follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) in giving a moderate dowry. This may be understood as meaning that Allah is referring to something that people do, without denouncing it, which indicates that it is not prohibited.

But giving a large amount may be disallowed, if it leads to mischief and undermining some religious principles, without serving any significant interest.

«And how could you take it when you have been intimate with one another, and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?» What this means is: before the marriage contract, the wife was forbidden to the husband, and she would not accept becoming permissible for him except by means of this dowry that he pays to her. Then once he has consummated the marriage with her, been intimate with her and touched her in a manner that was previously forbidden and which she would not have accepted without that compensation, he has taken his part of the deal, and the mahr (dowry) is now due from him. So how can he take his part of the deal, then after that take her part of it (namely the dowry). This is the worst kind of injustice. Moreover, Allah took a solemn covenant from husbands by means of the marriage contract, that they should fulfil their duties towards their wives.



﴿وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَجِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٢)

4:22. Do not marry women whom your fathers married, except what is already past: It was shameful and odious, an abominable custom indeed.

That is, do not marry women whom your fathers or forefathers married

﴿It was shameful﴾ that is, it was extremely abhorrent

﴿and odious﴾ that is, hateful to Allah and to people; indeed because of that, a son may hate a father and a father may hate a son, at the time when the son is enjoined to be kind to his father.

﴿an abominable custom indeed﴾ that is because this is one of the customs of the jāhiliyah (time of ignorance) which Islam came to disavow.



﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمْ أَلَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ مِمَّنْ أَرْضَعْتُمْ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبِّبَاتُكُمْ أَلَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ أَلَّتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَنُكُمْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَإِجْلَ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ

مُسْفِحِينَ^٥ فَمَا اسْتَسْتَعْتُم بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا تَرَاضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٢٣-٢٤)

- 4:23. Prohibited to you [for marriage] are: your mothers, your daughters, your sisters; your paternal aunts, your maternal aunts; your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters; your foster mothers, your foster sisters; your wives' mothers; your stepdaughters under your guardianship, born of your wives with whom you have consummated the marriage – and there will be no blame on you [if you marry the daughters] of [ex-wives] with whom you did not consummate the marriage; [those who have been] wives of your sons who are from your own loins; and two sisters in wedlock at the same time, except for what is past, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful;
- 4:24. Also [prohibited are] women already married, except any slave-girls you may own. This is Allah's ordinance, binding upon you. All women other than these are lawful for you, so that you may seek them with your wealth in honest wedlock, not fornication. When you consummate your marriage with them, give the dowries due to them. There is no sin on you in what you mutually agree upon [of changes] after the [initial] agreement. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.⁵

These verses include those who are *mahram* (prohibited for marriage) through blood ties, through breastfeeding (from a foster-mother) and through marriage, as well as combinations of relatives to whom marriage at the same time is prohibited. They also describe which women are permissible for marriage.

⁵ v. 24 is actually the first verse of Juz' 5, but as the author treated vv. 23-24 as a single passage, we included it in Juz' 4. (Translator)

Those who are prohibited for marriage through blood ties are seven whom Allah mentions here: the mother, which includes anyone who is connected to you through having given birth, no matter how far the line extends; the daughter, which includes anyone who has been born from you; sisters, which includes full sisters and half-sisters through either the father or mother; paternal aunts, which includes any sister of your father or grandfather, no matter how far the line of ascent extends; maternal aunts, which includes any sister of your mother or grandmother, no matter how far the line of ascent extends, whether she is an heir or not; daughters of brothers and daughters of sisters, no matter how far the line of descent extends.

These are the maḥrams or women to whom marriage is prohibited because of blood ties, according to scholarly consensus, as stated in this verse. All others, apart from these, are included in the words: ﴿All women other than these are lawful for you﴾ (4: 24), such as daughters of paternal aunts and uncles, and daughters of maternal aunts and uncles.

Those who are prohibited through breastfeeding by a foster mother, whom Allah mentions here, are the (foster) mother and (foster) sister. This indicates that the foster mother is prohibited for marriage even though the milk does not belong to her; rather it belongs to her husband (the father of the child whose birth is the cause of the milk supply being available). Pointing this out indicates that the owner of the milk (that is, the husband of the foster mother) is a father to the infant who is nursed by the foster mother. Once it is established that the foster mother is a mother to the infant and her husband is a father to him, anyone connected to them is also proven to be a maḥram or prohibited for marriage to the person who is breastfed by that foster mother, such as their siblings and their ascendants and descendants.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«What becomes maḥram (forbidden for marriage) through breastfeeding is that which becomes maḥram through blood ties.»
(Recorded by Abu Dâwood; al-Albâni graded it as sound)

Thus the prohibition will spread from the foster mother and from the owner of the milk to their relatives; however it only affects the offspring of the individual who was breastfed. That is on condition that five full breastfeedings occur during the first two years of life, as explained in the Sunnah.

Those who are prohibited through ties of marriage are four: the wives of one's father or grandfather, no matter how far the line of ascent extends; the wives of one's sons or grandsons, no matter how far the line of descent extends, whether they are heirs or blocked from inheriting; the mother or grandmothers of one's wife, no matter how far the line of ascent extends – these three become mahrams as soon as a marriage contract is done.

The fourth is the stepdaughter, that is the daughter or granddaughter of one's wife, no matter how far the line of descent extends. She does not become a mahram until he consummates the marriage with his wife, as Allah says here: ﴿your stepdaughters under your guardianship, born of your wives with whom you have consummated the marriage﴾.

The majority of scholars say that the words ﴿under your guardianship﴾ refer to what is usually the case, and is not to be regarded as a condition of the stepdaughter becoming a mahram. The stepdaughter becomes a mahram even if she is not under his guardianship, but there are two benefits of mentioning this description:

- 1- It highlights the wisdom behind prohibiting the stepdaughter for marriage, which is that she is like a daughter, so it is abhorrent to permit marriage to her;
- 2- It indicates that it is permissible to be alone with a stepdaughter, and she is like others who are under his care, such as his own daughter and so on. And Allah knows best.

With regard to combinations of relatives to whom marriage at the same time is prohibited, Allah mentioned being married to two sisters at the same time, and forbade it. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade being married to a woman and her paternal aunt, or maternal aunt, at the

same time. Any two women between whom are ties of kinship, and if one of them was male and the other female, she would be prohibited for marriage to him, it is prohibited to be married to both of them at the same time. That is because this may be a cause of severing ties of kinship.

Also prohibited for marriage are «women already married», that is those who have husbands. It is prohibited to marry them so long as they are still married, unless they are divorced and have completed the *'iddah*.

«except any slave-girls you may own» that is, those who have been captured in war. If a disbelieving woman who is married is captured in war, she becomes permissible for the Muslims after one menstrual cycle has passed (which serves to establish that she is not pregnant). But if a married slave woman is sold or given, her marriage is not invalidated because the second owner is in the same position as the previous owner, and because of the story of Bareerah,⁶ when the Prophet (ﷺ) gave her the choice.

«This is Allah's ordinance, binding upon you» that is, you must adhere to following its guidance, because in it is healing and light, and the explanation of what is permitted and what is prohibited.

«All women other than these are lawful for you» – this refers to all of those who are not mentioned in this verse; they are permissible and good. Thus what is prohibited is limited, but there is no limit to or

⁶ The story of Bareerah, when she was set free and she chose to annul her marriage to her husband, who was still a slave. Her husband loved her, and he was walking behind her on the streets of Madinah with tears flowing down his cheeks, pleading with her to come back to him, and she refused. «The Prophet (ﷺ) interceded for him and said to her: O Bareerah, fear Allah, for he is your husband and the father of your child. She said: O Messenger of Allah, are you commanding me to do that? He said: No, I am just interceding. She said: I have no need of him.» (Narrated by Abu Dāwūd, no. 2231; also recorded by an-Nasā'i and authenticated by al-Albāni)

restriction on that which is permitted. This is the kindness and mercy of Allah, and is intended to make things easy for people.

﴿so that you may seek them with your wealth﴾ that is, so that you may seek those whom you have seen and chosen from among those whom Allah has permitted to you, provided that your aim is ﴿honest wedlock﴾ that is, provided that you are seeking chastity, avoiding fornication and seeking to help your women remain chaste too.

﴿not fornication﴾. The one who commits fornication is not keeping his wife chaste, because he is fulfilling his desires in a prohibited manner, so his desire for permissible sex is weakened, and thus he is failing to keep his wife chaste. This indicates that no one should marry a person who is not chaste, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿A man who fornicates may only marry a woman who fornicates or who is a polytheist, and a woman who fornicates may only marry a man who fornicates or who is a polytheist. Such marriages are forbidden to the believers.﴾ (*an-Noor* 24: 3)

﴿When you consummate your marriage with them, give the dowries due to them﴾ that is, in return for intimacy. Hence when the husband consummates the marriage with his wife, the dowry becomes due.

﴿due to them﴾ that is, giving the dowry to them is a duty enjoined by Allah upon you; it is not something optional that if the man wishes he may give it and if he wishes he may withhold it. Or it may be that what is meant by the words ﴿due to them﴾ is: the sum that you agreed to, therefore it becomes binding upon you, so do not detract anything from it.

﴿There is no sin on you in what you mutually agree upon [of changes] after the [initial] agreement﴾ that is, anything extra that is given by the husband, or anything that the wife waives willingly. This is the view of many of the commentators. Many of them said: this verse was revealed concerning temporary marriage (*mut'ah*) with women, which was permissible at the beginning of Islam, then the

Prophet (ﷺ) forbade it; the verse states that one should set a time limit (for the temporary marriage) and agree on payment, then once the time has ended, if they mutually agree to increase or decrease the amount of payment, there is no blame on them. And Allah knows best.

﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has perfect and vast knowledge, and perfect wisdom. By His knowledge and wisdom He has decreed these laws for you and set these limits that separate what is permissible from what is forbidden.



﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكَحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فِتْيَائِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَانْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسْفَحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۚ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٥)

- 4:25. If any of you does not have the means to marry free believing women, he may marry believing women from among the slave women whom you own and Allah knows best about your faith; you belong to one another. Marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries, according to what is reasonable. They should be chaste, not given to committing fornication or having illicit relationships. When they are married, if they commit adultery, their punishment shall be half that of free women. This is for those of you who fear that you will sin; but if you practise self-restraint, that is better for you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁷

⁷ Juz' 5 actually begins with v. 24, but as the author treated vv. 23-24 as a single passage, we included it in Juz' 4. (Translator)

That is, if anyone cannot afford the mahr to marry free believing women, and fears that he may fall into sin, namely fornication, or suffer a great deal of hardship, then it is permissible for him to marry believing slave women. These women are to be judged according to what appears to be the case, and Allah knows best who is a sincere believer and who is not. Worldly matters are to be judged on the basis of outward appearance, and in the hereafter matters will be judged on the basis of what is hidden in people's hearts.

«Marry them», namely (believing) slave women
 «with the permission of their masters», whether the slave woman has one master or several.
 «and give them their dowries, according to what is reasonable» that is, even if they are slave women, just as it is obligatory to give the mahr to a free woman, it is also obligatory to give it to a slave woman.

But it is not permissible to marry slave women unless they are «chaste» that is, they refrain from immoral behaviour; «not given to committing fornication» openly «or having illicit relationships» that is, taking lovers in secret.

The point is that it is not permissible for a free Muslim man to marry a slave woman, unless four conditions, as stipulated by Allah, are met: they should be believers; they should be chaste in a real sense and sincerely; the man should not be able to afford to marry a free woman; and he should be afraid of falling into sin or suffering extreme hardship. If these conditions are met, then it is permissible for him to marry a slave woman.

Nevertheless, refraining from marrying them is better, because it will expose his children to slavery and it is not a dignified option. This applies if it is possible to restrain oneself; if a person cannot restrain himself from committing haram actions except by marrying slave women, then it becomes a must. Hence Allah says: «but if you practise self-restraint, that is better for you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful».

«When they are married» that is, if they – namely slave women – get married, «their punishment shall be half that of free women». This applies to that which may be halved, namely flogging. So they are to be given fifty lashes. With regard to stoning, there is no stoning for slave women, because it cannot be halved. Therefore if they are not married (and they commit fornication), there is no ḥadd punishment for them, according to some scholars; rather they are to be given a disciplinary punishment (*ta'zeer*), in order to deter them from immoral conduct. However, according to other scholars, if non-Muslim slave women commit immoral actions, they should also be given a disciplinary punishment.

This verse ends with these two names of Allah: Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, because these rulings are a mercy and kindness to people. These rulings do not place constraints on them; rather they make things very easy. Mentioning forgiveness after mention of the ḥadd punishment indicates that the ḥadd punishment is expiation, by means of which Allah forgives the sins of His slaves, as it states in the hadith. The ruling on a male slave with regard to the ḥadd punishment mentioned is the same as the ruling on a female slave, because there is no difference between them.



﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُخَيِّرَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٢٨﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٦-٢٨)

4:26. Allah wants to make things clear to you and to guide you to the [righteous] ways of those who came before you; and [He wants to] turn to you in mercy; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

4:27. Allah wants to turn to you in mercy, but those who follow their lusts want you to drift far away from the right path.

4:28. Allah wants to lighten your burdens, for man was created weak.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of His great blessing and gift, and He highlights His care for His believing slaves and how easy His religion is.

﴿Allah wants to make things clear to you﴾ that is, everything you need to know about truth and falsehood, halal and haram.

﴿and to guide you to the [righteous] ways of those who came before you﴾ that is, those whom Allah blessed of the Prophets and their followers, in their praiseworthy conduct, righteous deeds, perfect characteristics and guided ways. Therefore He did what He wanted and explained to you what He explained to those who came before you, and He guided you to the right path in knowledge and in deeds.

﴿and [He wants to] turn to you in mercy﴾ that is, He shows mercy to you in all your situations and in all that He prescribes for you, so that you will be aware of the limits of Allah and be content with what He has permitted; then your sins will be reduced because of what Allah has made easy for you. This is by His mercy towards His slaves. By His mercy towards them, if they commit sin, He opens the gates of mercy to them and makes their hearts incline towards repentance to Him, so that they stand in humility before Him, then He turns in mercy towards them and accepts what He enabled them to do. To Him be praise and thanks for that.

﴿and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His knowledge is perfect and all-encompassing, and His wisdom is perfect. By His knowledge, He taught you that which you did not know, including these things and limits. By His wisdom, He accepts the repentance of those who His mercy and wisdom dictate that their repentance should be accepted, and He forsakes those who His wisdom and justice dictate should not be fit for repentance.

﴿Allah wants to turn to you in mercy﴾ that is, by means of repentance that helps you to start anew, fills your hearts with peace and brings you closer to Allah.

﴿but those who follow their lusts﴾ that is, those who go along with their whims and desires wherever they lead them, and give precedence to that over that which pleases Allah; they worship their whims and desires. (This refers to) all types of disbelievers, sinners and those who give precedence to their whims and desires over obedience to their Lord.

These people ﴿want you to drift far away from the right path﴾ that is, they want you to deviate from the straight path and follow the path of those with whom Allah is angry and those who have gone astray. They want to divert you from obedience to the Most Merciful to obedience to the Shayṭān, from adherence to the guidelines that lead to happiness by obeying His commands to following the one whose way leads to utter misery.

Once you realise that Allah (ﷻ) enjoins upon you that which is in your best interests and will lead to success and happiness, and that those who follow their whims and desires are enjoining upon you that which will lead to the utmost loss and misery, then choose for yourselves the better of the two callers and choose the better of the two paths.

﴿Allah wants to lighten your burdens﴾ that is, by making what is enjoined upon you easy and making it easy to refrain from what He has forbidden. Then when there is some difficulty in adhering to some of the laws that He prescribes, He permits to you that which is dictated by your deeds, such as eating dead meat, blood and the like, for the one who is in desperate need (and has no other option), or marrying slave women, for a free man, if he meets the conditions mentioned above. That is by His perfect mercy and kindness, and His wisdom and knowledge of man's weakness in all aspects, physical weakness, weakness of will and resolve, weakness of faith and lack

of patience. Because of all of that, Allah reduces for him that which he is too weak to bear and that which his faith, patience and strength are unable to cope with.



﴿يَتَايَهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ رَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدُوًّا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٩-٣٠)

- 4:29. O you who believe, do not consume one another's property by unjust means, unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another], for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you.
- 4:30. Whoever does that maliciously and wrongfully, We will cast him into fire; and that is easy for Allah.

Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to consume one another's wealth unlawfully. This includes taking it by force, stealing, taking it by means of gambling, or by other evil means. Indeed it may also include consuming one's own wealth in vanity and extravagance, because that is also unlawful and is not right.

Moreover, when Allah (ﷻ) forbids consuming it unlawfully, He permits them to consume it by means of trade and other ways of earning that are free of anything objectionable and that fulfil the conditions of mutual consent and so on.

﴿And do not kill yourselves [or one another]﴾ that is, do not kill one another, and no one should kill himself. This includes throwing oneself into risky activities or dangers that may lead to harm or death.

﴿for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you﴾ and by His mercy He protects you and your wealth, forbids you to waste it or destroy it, and He has ordained consequences for that in the form of *hudood* punishments.

﴿do not consume one another's property... And do not kill yourselves [or one another]﴾. In the original Arabic, it refers to "you" in the plural. This eloquently and concisely conveys the idea that it is not permissible to consume your own wealth or that of others, or to kill oneself or others.

Moreover, saying "your wealth" and "your property", to the believers as a whole, indicates that all believers, in their mutual love, compassion, mercy and interests are like one body, as faith unites them to achieve their religious and worldly interests.

When Allah (ﷻ) forbade consuming wealth unlawfully, which will result in the greatest harm for the one who consumes it and the one whose wealth was consumed, He permitted that which serves their interests of different ways of earning a livelihood, such as trade, crafts, professions and rentals:

﴿unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent﴾, in which case it is permissible for you.

Mutual consent is stipulated – even though it is a trade – in order to highlight that it is essential that the contract should not be usurious, because usury is not trade; rather it is contrary to the aims of trade. It is essential that each party give consent and enter into it willingly. Part of fulfilling the condition of mutual consent is that the item that is the subject of the transaction should be clearly known, because if it is not known, it is impossible to give consent. It should also be possible to deliver it, because if it is not possible to deliver an item, then it is akin to gambling. There can be no consent in any types of ambiguous transactions, therefore such transactions are invalid.

This verse also indicates that transactions are done by words or deeds indicative of consent, because Allah stipulated that there be mutual consent. Therefore in whatever way consent is indicated, the transaction becomes valid thereby.

Then Allah concludes the verse with the words: «for verily Allah has been Most Merciful to you». By His mercy, He protected your lives and your wealth, and He forbade any transgression against them.

«Whoever does that» namely consumes wealth unlawfully and kills people,

«maliciously and wrongfully» that is, not out of ignorance or by mistake

«We will cast him into fire» that is, a huge fire; in the original Arabic, this word appears in the indefinite, which indicates that it is huge.

«and that is easy for Allah».



﴿إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلَكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣١)

- 4:31. If you abstain from the major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden to do, We will erase your [minor] sins for you and admit you to a place of honour [paradise].

This is by the grace and kindness of Allah to His believing slaves; He promises them that if they avoid major sins, He will forgive all their (minor) sins or bad deeds, and He will admit them to a place of honour, a place of much good, namely paradise in which there is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has never entered the mind of man.

Avoiding major sins includes doing the obligatory duties, omission of which constitutes a major sin, such as the five daily prayers, Jumu'ah (Friday prayer) and fasting Ramadan. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The five (daily) prayers, one Jumu'ah to another, and one Ramadan to another, expiate whatever (sins) come in between them, so long as major sins are avoided.» (Muslim)

The best definition I have found for major sins is that the major sin is that for which there is prescription of a hadd punishment in this world or warning of punishment in the hereafter, or it is described as being contrary to faith, resulting in being cursed or incurring divine wrath.



﴿وَلَا تَنَّمَنُوا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۚ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ ۚ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٢)

- 4:32. Do not covet the bounties which Allah has bestowed more abundantly on some of you than on others. Men will have the reward for what they earn, and women will have the reward for what they earn. Ask Allah of His bounty. Verily Allah has knowledge of all things.

Allah (ﷻ) instructs the believers that no one should covet that which Allah has given more of to others, whether that is things that it is possible for them to acquire or things that it is not possible for them to acquire. Hence women should not covet the characteristics of men, by means of which men have an advantage over women; the one who is poor or has some imperfections or shortcomings should not merely wish to be like one who is rich or perfect, because that is

the very essence of envy, which is to wish for the blessing that Allah bestowed upon someone else to be taken from him and given to you.

Moreover, such wishes are indicative of displeasure with the decree of Allah and being content with laziness and wishful thinking, unaccompanied by any effort or earning. Rather what is praiseworthy is two things: to strive to the best of one's ability and to do that which will benefit one's religious and worldly interests, asking Allah for His bounty, and not relying on oneself or anyone other than one's Lord. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Men will have the reward for what they earn﴾ that is, of their deeds that will lead to the desired results.

﴿and women will have the reward for what they earn﴾ – so each of them will not attain anything but that which he or she has earned and worked hard for.

﴿Ask Allah of His bounty﴾ that is, for everything that has to do with your religious or worldly affairs. Doing so is a sign of wisdom and of being blessed, in contrast to the one who fails to strive or relies on himself, not acknowledging his need of his Lord; or those who do both, in which case they are forsaken and are losers.

﴿Verily Allah has knowledge of all things﴾, therefore He gives to the one who He knows deserves it, and He withholds it from the one who He knows does not deserve it.



﴿وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوْلَىٰ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ
أَيْمَنُكُمْ فَأَتَوْهُمْ نَصِيحُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ٣٣)

- 4:33. We have made for everyone helpers and supporters of those whom parents and close relatives leave behind. As for those

with whom you have made a solemn covenant, give them their dues. Verily Allah is witness to all things.

﴿We have made for everyone﴾ that is, for all people ﴿helpers and supporters﴾ who support him and help him, and cooperate with him in different issues ﴿of those whom parents and close relatives leave behind﴾. This includes all relatives, ascendants and descendants, siblings and their children. These are helpers and supporters among one's relatives.

Then Allah mentions another type of helpers: ﴿As for those with whom you have made a solemn covenant﴾ that is, those with whom you have entered into an agreement to help and support one another, to share wealth, and so on. All of that is the blessing that Allah bestows upon His slaves, so that helpers and supporters cooperate in matters that some of them could not do alone.

﴿give them their dues﴾ that is, give helpers and supporters their dues that you are obliged to give of your help and support in whatever does not involve disobedience towards Allah, and give what is due of shares of inheritance to the relatives who are described as helpers and supporters.

﴿Verily Allah is witness to all things﴾ that is, He sees everything, by means of His knowledge of all things; He sees the movements of His slaves and hears all their voices.



﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنِينَاتٌ ۚ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاللَّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ ۚ فَعِظُوهُنَّ ۚ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأْضِرُّوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ

أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٣٤)

- 4:34. Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made one of them excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth [on them]. Therefore the righteous women are obedient, and guard in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. As for those women on whose part you fear defiant disobedience, [first] admonish them, [next] refuse to share their beds, [and last] hit them [lightly]. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Verily Allah is Most High, Great.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that: ﴿Men are in charge of women﴾ that is, they are in charge with regard to making sure that they are doing their duties towards Allah (ﷻ), by keeping up with obligatory duties and restraining them from committing evil; men are obliged to make sure that they (women) adhere to that. They are also in charge of them in terms of spending on them, clothing them, and providing accommodation to them.

Then He states the reason why men are in charge of women: ﴿because Allah has made one of them excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth [on them]﴾ that is, because of the superiority of men over women; men are superior to women in many ways; for example, positions of political authority are only for men, as is prophethood and messengerhood. Moreover, men are singled out, to the exclusion of women, for many acts of worship, such as jihad and Eid and Jumu'ah prayers.

It is also because of what Allah has bestowed exclusively on them of wisdom, mature thinking, patience and perseverance, the like of which women do not have. Men also have the exclusive obligation of spending on their wives; moreover, there are many types of spending

that are demanded exclusively of men, by which they are distinct from women.

Perhaps this is the reason why Allah says ﴿and because they spend of their wealth [on them]﴾. No mention is made of those on whom they are to spend, so as to indicate spending in a general sense. Thus it is known that a man is like a guardian and a master to his wife, and she is like a prisoner and servant to him. Therefore his role is to do his duty towards that which Allah has put him in charge of.

The woman's role is to obey her Lord and obey her husband. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Therefore the righteous women are obedient﴾ to Allah

﴿and guard in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard﴾ that is, they obey their husbands even in their absence; the wife guards her husband with regard to herself and his wealth. That is because Allah has enjoined upon them to guard themselves, and He has guided them to that; they could not do it without His help, because the human soul is inclined to evil. But whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him and take care of everything that worries him of his religious and worldly affairs.

﴿As for those women on whose part you fear defiant disobedience﴾ that is, their refusal to obey their husbands, such as disobeying them in word and deed. In that case a husband may discipline his wife, starting with the mildest of measures.

﴿[first] admonish them﴾ that is, explain the ruling of Allah with regard to obedience and disobedience to the husband, encourage them to be obedient, and warn them against being disobedient. If the wife stops, then that is the desired result. Otherwise, the husband should refuse to share her bed, and not sleep with her or have intimate relations with her, to the extent that will achieve the desired aim. If that does not succeed, then he may hit her in a manner that does not cause pain.

If one of these means is successful and they (wives) obey you (husbands), «take no further action against them» that is, you have got what you wanted, so stop rebuking her for what happened in the past, and stop looking for faults, because that will cause harm and stir up dispute.

«Verily Allah is Most High, Great» that is, He is absolutely exalted in all aspects, in His essence, in status and in might; He is great and nothing is greater than Him or more majestic or more mighty; He is great in His essence and attributes.



﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٥)

4:35. If you fear a breach between them, appoint an arbitrator from his family and another from hers; if they both want to put things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

That is, if you fear a breach between the spouses, and that they will keep away from one another,

«appoint an arbitrator from his family and another from hers» that is, two men who are accountable, Muslims, of good character and wise, who are both aware of the problem. All of these qualities may be understood from the word *hakam* (translated here as «arbitrator»); no one is fit to be an arbitrator except one who possesses these attributes. They should examine the objection of each spouse against the other, then tell each one what he or she must do. Then if one of them is not able to adhere to that, they should advise the other spouse to be content with whatever is available of provision and accept whatever is the attitude of the other spouse.

Whenever it is possible to bring about reconciliation and set things straight, they should not turn to the other option.

If the matter reaches a point where it is not possible to keep them together and set things straight between them, except in a way of enmity, hostility and disobedience to Allah, and they realise that separation is better for them, the arbitrators may decide to separate them. In that case the consent of the husband is not essential, as is indicated here, because Allah called them *hakam* (translated here as «arbitrators»), which implies having the authority to issue a ruling or verdict which must be accepted, even if the one against whom it is issued is not happy with it.

Hence Allah says: «if they both want to put things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them» that is, by means of sound advice and gentle words that soften the hearts and bring about harmony between the spouses.

«Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware» that is, He knows all that is visible and hidden and is aware of subtleties and secrets. By means of His knowledge and awareness, He prescribes these sublime rulings and guidelines for you.



﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَذِي الْفُرْقَانِ﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَ بَنِي آدَمَ أُولَئِكَ يَنْفَكُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَالْجَنَّةِ
 لَا يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَ بَنِي آدَمَ أُولَئِكَ يَنْفَكُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ
 وَالْجَنَّةِ لَا يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَ بَنِي آدَمَ أُولَئِكَ يَنْفَكُونَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ
 وَالْجَنَّةِ لَا يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

(سورة النساء: ٣٦-٣٨)

- 4:36. Worship Allah, and do not ascribe any partner to Him. Be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are related to you and neighbours who are not related to you, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and what you own of slaves. For Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful,
- 4:37. Those who are stingy, and exhort people to stinginess, and conceal what Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty – for We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating punishment –
- 4:38. And those who spend their wealth to show off to people, but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day. If anyone has the Shayṭān as a companion, what an evil companion he is!

Here Allah commands His slaves to worship Him alone and not associate anything with Him. This means declaring complete servitude to Him, submitting to His commands and prohibitions out of love, humility and sincerity towards Him, in all acts of worship, both apparent and hidden. He forbids the association of anything with Him, whether that is in a major or minor sense, and whether the so-called partner is an angel, a Prophet, a “saint” (*wali*), or any other created beings that have no power to bring benefit or ward off harm from themselves, to cause death or give life or resurrect. Rather what is obligatory is to direct one’s worship sincerely to the One Who has absolute perfection in all ways and Who has absolute control which no one shares with Him or helps him in the control He has. Then after enjoining worship of Him alone and fulfilment of His rights, He enjoins fulfilling duties towards other people, the closest then the next closest:

﴿Be kind to parents﴾ that is, treat them kindly and speak decent words to them, addressing them gently, doing good deeds for them, obeying their instructions, avoiding what they forbid you to do, spending on them, honouring anyone who has a connection to them,

and upholding ties of kinship, for you have no ties of kinship except through them.

Kindness has two opposites, bad treatment and failure to show kindness. Both are forbidden.

﴿relatives﴾ – we should also show kindness to relatives. This includes all relatives, close or distant. We should treat them well in word and deed and not sever ties of kinship in word or deed.

﴿orphans﴾ that is, those who have lost their fathers when they are small. They have rights over the Muslims, whether they are relatives or not, who should sponsor them, be kind to them, console them, discipline them and give them a good upbringing, and take care of their religious and worldly affairs.

﴿those in need﴾ – they are the ones who are not able to earn enough to meet their needs or the needs of those they are in charge of. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined showing kindness to them by meeting their needs and helping them to ward off poverty, and encouraging others to do so, and doing that as much as one can.

﴿neighbours who are related to you﴾ that is, the neighbour who is related to you has two rights: the rights of a neighbour and the rights of a relative. He has the right that his neighbour should treat him kindly, in line with what is customarily regarded as kindness.

﴿and﴾ likewise ﴿neighbours who are not related to you﴾. The closer the neighbour's door is to yours, the greater his rights over you. So we should take care of neighbours by giving them gifts and charity, inviting them over, being kind in word and deed, and not annoying them in word or deed.

﴿the companion by your side﴾ – it was said that this refers to a travelling companion, a wife or companions in general, which is most likely to be the correct meaning, because it includes companions at home and when travelling, and it also includes the wife.

A person's companion has rights over him more than the rights dictated by the fact that he is a Muslim with regard to helping him in his religious and worldly affairs, and being sincere and honest with him in good times and bad, and regardless of whether one feels energetic or reluctant. He should love for him what he loves for himself and hate for him what he hates for himself. The longer the companionship lasts, the more the mutual rights are confirmed and emphasised.

﴿the wayfarer﴾ – this refers to a stranger who is in need in a foreign land, or even if he is not in need. He has rights over the Muslims because of his need and because of the fact that he is in a strange land; they should help him to reach his destination or help him partway, and they should honour him and offer him comfort.

﴿and what you own of slaves﴾ – this phrase (*lit.* “what your right hands possess”) may also include livestock and beasts of burden; kindness to them includes making sure that they have enough, not overburdening them, helping them with whatever tasks they are assigned, and disciplining them in a way that is in their best interests. The one who does these things as enjoined is the one who is truly submitting to his Lord, showing humility towards the slaves of Allah and adhering to the commands and laws of Allah. This is the one who deserves the great reward and praise. The one who does not do that is a person who is turning away from his Lord, failing to submit to His commands and is not showing humility towards other people; rather his attitude is one of arrogance towards the slaves of Allah, and he is filled with self-admiration and boasting about what he says. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿For Allah does not love those who are arrogant﴾ that is, those who are filled with self-pride and who look down upon people, ﴿and boastful﴾ that is, they praise themselves by way of pride and vanity towards the slaves of Allah.

Their arrogance and vanity prevent them from carrying out their duties; hence Allah criticises them for that, as He says:

﴿Those who are stingy﴾ that is, they refuse to spend as they are obliged to

﴿and exhort people to stinginess﴾ by their words and deeds.

﴿and conceal what Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty﴾ that is, of knowledge by means of which those who have gone astray and the ignorant could be guided. They conceal it from them and teach them falsehood that prevents them from learning the truth. Thus they combine stinginess with regard to wealth and stinginess with regard to knowledge with striving for their own perdition and the doom of others. This is the quality of the disbelievers, hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating punishment﴾ that is, as they were arrogant towards the slaves of Allah and withheld the rights of Allah and caused others to also withhold what they owed to Allah, as a result of being stingy and not being guided, Allah will humiliate them with a painful punishment and eternal disgrace. We seek refuge with You, O Allah, from all evil.

Then Allah tells us about the spending that is motivated by the desire to show off and gain a reputation, and is not based on faith:

﴿And those who spend their wealth to show off to people﴾ that is, so that they will see them, praise them and respect them.

﴿but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day﴾ that is, their spending is not motivated by sincerity and faith in Allah, and the hope of His reward; therefore this comes under the heading of the footsteps of the Shayṭān and his works, to which he calls his followers, so that they will be inhabitants of hell. They do these deeds because they are his companions and he is pushing them in that direction. Hence Allah says:

﴿If anyone has the Shayṭān as a companion, what an evil companion he is!﴾ That is, what an evil companion is the one who seeks the doom of his companion and strives hard to achieve that.

Just as the one who withholds what Allah has bestowed upon him and conceals the knowledge with which Allah has blessed him is a

sinner and offender who is in opposition to his Lord, the one who is motivated by something other than seeking the pleasure of Allah in his spending and worship is also a sinner who is disobeying his Lord, and thus deserves punishment, because Allah only enjoined obedience to Him and adherence to His commands to be done in a sincere manner, as He says:

«Although they were enjoined only to worship Allah with sincere devotion to Him, being true in faith to Him alone, and to establish prayer and give zakâh, and that is the true religion...» (al-Bayinah 98: 5)

This is the type of acceptable deeds for which a person deserves to be praised and this is what Allah encourages people to base their deeds on, as He says:



﴿وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ ءَامَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمْ عَلِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٩)

4:39. What harm would it do them to believe in Allah and in the Last Day, and to spend out of what Allah has bestowed upon them? For Allah has full knowledge of them.

That is, what harm would it do them, and what trouble or hardship would befall them, if they had faith in Allah that is based on sincerity and they spent from the wealth that Allah has bestowed upon them and with which He has blessed them, thus combining sincerity and spending (for His sake)?

Because sincerity is something secret between a person and his Lord, and no one sees it except Allah, He states that He has knowledge of all their situations: «For Allah has full knowledge of them».



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُّضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (٤٠) فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا (٤١) يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصَوُا الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّى بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٠-٤٢)

- 4:40. Verily, Allah does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust. And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it, and give an immense reward of His own.
- 4:41. How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against them?
- 4:42. On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth could be levelled over them. But they will not be able to conceal anything from Allah.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the perfect nature of His justice and grace, and that He is above the opposites of that, such as injustice great or small.

﴿Verily, Allah does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust﴾ that is, He does not detract from a person's good deeds or increase his bad deeds in the slightest, as He says elsewhere: ﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.﴾ (az-Zalzalah 99: 7-8)

﴿And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it﴾ that is, He will multiply it tenfold or more, according to the nature of the deed and how beneficial it was, and according to the situation of the doer in terms of sincerity, love and righteousness.

﴿and give an immense reward of His own﴾ that is, in addition to the reward for the deed itself, such as enabling him to do more righteous deeds, or to give more charity, or to show more kindness.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:

«How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you [O Muhammad] as a witness against them?» That is, how will it be, how will the great judgement be, when the judgement in which the One Who will judge has perfect knowledge, perfect justice and perfect wisdom is combined with the testimony of the best of humankind, namely the Messengers who will testify against their nations, along with the confession of those against whom judgement is passed? This, by Allah, is the most comprehensive judgement, the most just and the greatest.

Then those against whom judgement will be passed will confirm the perfect grace and justice of Allah, and will utter words of praise. At that point, some people will be blessed with triumph, success and honour, and others will be doomed to disgrace, shame and the humiliating punishment.

Hence Allah says: «On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger» that is, those who combine disbelief in Allah and His Messenger with disobedience towards the Messenger «will wish that the earth could be levelled over them» that is, that it would swallow them and they would become dust and become nothing, as Allah (ﷻ) tells us that they will say:

«...and the disbeliever will say: Would that I were mere dust!» (*an-Naba'* 78: 40)

«But they will not be able to conceal anything from Allah» that is, rather they will admit to Him what they did, and their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them, speaking of what they used to do. On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest (the true nature of all things) (*cf.* 24: 25).

With regard to what was narrated about how the disbelievers will conceal their disbelief and deny their evil deeds, that will happen at

some stages of the Day of Resurrection, when they think that their denial will avail them against the punishment of Allah. Then when they realise the true nature of their situation and their faculties testify against them, at that point things will become clear and there will be no reason to conceal anything, and there will be no benefit in doing so.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٣)

- 4:43. O you who believe, do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you are saying, nor in a state of major impurity [*janābah*] – except while passing through – until you have washed yourselves completely [*ghusl*]. If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [*tayammum*]. For Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Forgiving.

Here Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to come near prayer when they are intoxicated, until they know what they are saying. This includes coming near places of prayer, such as the mosque, which the one who is intoxicated should not be allowed to enter, as well as the prayer itself. It is not permissible for one who is intoxicated to pray or do any act of worship, because his mind is confused and he does not know what he is saying. Hence Allah defined the times when such a person may pray and told him to postpone it until he knows what he is saying. This verse was abrogated by the complete prohibition

of intoxicants. In the beginning intoxicants were not prohibited, then Allah (ﷻ) hinted to His slaves that they would be prohibited, as He said:

﴿They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some benefit for people; but the sin is greater than the benefit...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 219)

Then He forbade being intoxicated when attending prayers, as in this verse. Then He forbade intoxicants altogether, at all times, as He said:

﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Shayṭân's handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination]...﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 90)

Moreover, that becomes more emphatically prohibited at the time of attending the prayer, because of what it leads to of this evil situation, which is not being able to achieve the purpose of prayer, that which is its soul and essence, namely proper focus and presence of mind, because intoxicants befog the mind and prevent one from remembering Allah and from focusing on prayer. We may also understand from the meaning of the verse that it is not allowed to start praying when one is extremely drowsy, to the point that he is not aware of what he is saying and doing. Indeed it may indicate that the one who wants to pray should deal with anything that is distracting him, such as resisting the urge to urinate or defecate, or when one wants to eat, and so on, as is mentioned in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths.

Then Allah says: ﴿nor in a state of major impurity [janâbah] – except while passing through﴾ that is, do not come near prayer when one of you is in a state of janâbah (impurity following sexual activity), except in this case, which is when one is passing through the mosque and not staying in it.

﴿until you have washed yourselves completely [ghusl]﴾ that is, when you have done ghusl and removed the reason why it was disallowed

to approach the prayer, then it becomes permissible to approach the prayer. But it is permissible for the one who is in a state of janâbah to pass through the mosque only.

﴿If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [tayammum]﴾. Tayammum (“dry ablution”) is permissible for the one who is sick in general terms, whether water is available or not; the reason for that is sickness that makes it difficult to use water. The same ruling applies when travelling, because that is when water may be scarce. So if a traveller has no water, but he only has enough to meet his needs for drinking and so on, it is permissible for him to do tayammum.

The same applies if a person invalidates his *wuḍoo'* by urinating or defecating, or touching women. It is permissible for him to do tayammum if he cannot find water, whether he is travelling or not, as is indicated by the general meaning of the verse.

In conclusion, Allah (ﷻ) has permitted tayammum in two cases: when there is no water, which applies whether one is travelling or not, and when it is too difficult to use water, because of sickness and the like.

The commentators differed concerning the meaning of the words ﴿or you have touched women﴾: does this refer to intercourse, in which case the meaning of the verse is that it is permissible for one who is in a state of janâbah to do tayammum, and there are many *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadiths to support this view, or does it mean simply touching with the hand; this applies if there is the possibility of *madhy* being produced, which refers to touching with desire – thus this verse indicates that *wuḍoo'* is invalidated in this case?

The *fuqahâ'* quoted the words ﴿and cannot find water﴾ as supporting the view that it is obligatory to look for water when the time for prayer begins. They said: That is because we cannot say,

“he did not find water” if he did not look for it; rather we can only say that after looking for it. They also quoted that as evidence for the view that it is permissible to use water that has been changed by any pure substance; in fact one must use it to purify oneself, because that is included in the phrase ﴿and cannot find water﴾, because this is still water. Others disagreed with that.

This verse prescribes this great ruling with which Allah has blessed this Ummah, namely the prescription of tayammum, and all scholars are agreed on that, praise be to Allah.

Tayammum must be done with clean earth, which refers to anything that protrudes from the surface of the earth, whether it has dust on it or not. It may refer specifically to that which has dust, because Allah says: ﴿and wipe your faces and hands with it﴾, and one cannot wipe with that which does not have any dust on it.

﴿and wipe your faces and hands with it﴾ – these are the places to be wiped in tayammum: the entire face and the arms up to the elbows, as is indicated by the ṣaḥeeḥ hadiths. It is recommended to strike the clean dust once, as is indicated by the hadith of ‘Ammâr, which indicates that tayammum in the case of janâbah is the same as tayammum in other cases, namely wiping the face and arms.

Note:

It should be noted that the main aims of medicine focus on three principles: protecting health from what may harm it, getting rid of harmful things and prescribing an appropriate diet. Allah has referred to all of them in His Book.

With regard to protecting health from that which may harm it, He has instructed us to eat and drink but not to go to excess in doing so; He has permitted the traveller and the one who is sick to refrain from fasting, so as to protect their health, by using that which will help the body to keep going in a reasonable manner; and protecting the sick person from that which may harm him.

With regard to getting rid of harmful things, Allah (ﷻ) has permitted the pilgrim in *ihram* who has an ailment in his scalp to shave his head. This may indicate that one should get rid of that which is more serious than that, such as urine, stools, vomit, *maniy* (semen), blood and other things, as pointed out by Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him).

This verse indicates that it is obligatory to wipe the entire face and arms, and that it is permissible to do tayammum even if the time left for prayer is not short; the individual is not to seek water except when there is a reason to do so. And Allah knows best.

Then the verse ends with the words: ﴿For Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Forgiving﴾ that is, He pardons a great deal and forgives His believing slaves by making things very easy for them, as it is not difficult for a person to obey His commands, so that he will not go through hardship.

By His pardon and forgiveness, He had mercy on this Ummah and prescribed purification with dust instead of water, when it is not possible to use water.

By His pardon and forgiveness, He has opened the gate of repentance to the sinners, and He invites them to turn to Him, and He promises forgiveness of sins.

By His pardon and forgiveness, if the believer brought an earthful of sins, then was to meet Him not associating anything with Him, He will grant him forgiveness as great as it.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشَرُّونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ ۚ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا ۝﴾ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ، وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعَيْنَا لِيَّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي الَّذِينَ ؕ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْ مَا كَانَ

خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٤٦﴾ (سورة النساء)

(٤٦-٤٤)

- 4:44. Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They purchase misguidance and want you to lose your way.
- 4:45. But Allah knows best who your enemies are. Allah is sufficient as a protector, and Allah is sufficient as a helper.
- 4:46. Among the Jews are some who distort the meaning of [revealed] words, and say: We hear and we disobey, and: Listen, may you not hear, and: *Râ'inâ*,⁸ with a twist of their tongues so as to disparage religion. If only they had said: We hear and we obey, and: Listen, and: *Undhurnâ*, it would have been better for them, and more proper. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, and only a few of them will believe.

This is a criticism of «those who were given a portion of the scripture» and implies a warning not to be deceived by them or fall into their traps. Here Allah tells us that they «purchase misguidance» that is, they love it a great deal and give it precedence like one who spends a great deal of money to get what he loves. Thus they prefer misguidance to guidance, disbelief to faith, and wretchedness to happiness, yet despite that they also «want you to lose your way».

Thus they are very keen that you should be misguided and they are trying their utmost to achieve that, but as Allah has been protecting His believing slaves and helping them, He explains to them how these

⁸ *Râ'inâ* means "Listen to us"; *undhurnâ* (mentioned later in the verse) means "Look at us". Both words convey the meaning of "Pay attention to us", but with a slight twist in pronunciation, the former had an offensive meaning in Hebrew, which the Jews took advantage of to mock the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence the believers were instructed to use a word that could not be twisted in this manner.

people are misguided and how they are misguiding others. Hence He says: ﴿Allah is sufficient as a protector﴾ that is, He takes charge of His slaves' affairs and bestows His grace upon them in all their affairs, and guides them to that which will lead them to happiness and prosperity.

﴿and Allah is sufficient as a helper﴾; He helps them against their enemies and explains to them what they should be cautious of with regard to the enemy, and what could help them against them. His protection leads to good and His help keeps them away from evil.

Then Allah explains the extent of their misguidance and stubbornness, and how they prefer falsehood to truth:

﴿Among the Jews﴾ that is, some of the Jews, namely the misguided scholars among them

﴿are some who distort the meaning of [revealed] words﴾ either by changing the words or the meaning, or both. An example of their distortion is how they distorted the description given in their Books, that could not be truly applicable to anyone but Muhammad (ﷺ); they suggested that it referred to someone else and that he was not the one who was meant, and they concealed it.

This is how they dealt with knowledge, in the worst manner, by turning ideas upside down and applying the true description to someone else falsely, thus denying that truth. With regard to how they act in terms of deeds and submission, ﴿[they] say: We hear and we disobey﴾ that is, we hear what you say and we disobey your command. This is the utmost disbelief, stubbornness and turning away from submission.

Likewise, they addressed the Messenger (ﷺ) in the most offensive and impolite manner, by saying ﴿Listen, may you not hear﴾ meaning: listen to us, and you will not hear what you like; rather you will hear what you dislike.

﴿and: *Rā'inā*﴾ what they meant by this word was something offensive. They thought that because this word could be understood

as meaning something other than what they meant, they would be able to trick Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). By using this word, with a twist of the tongue, their intention was to disparage the religion and cast aspersions upon the Messenger (ﷺ), and they stated that intention clearly to one another when they were alone. Hence Allah says: ﴿with a twist of their tongues so as to disparage religion﴾.

Then He guided them to something that would be better for them than that, by saying: ﴿If only they had said: We hear and we obey, and: Listen, and: *Undhurnâ*, it would have been better for them, and more proper﴾. That is because these words sound better and they reflect a sublime etiquette when addressing the Messenger (ﷺ), show obedience to Allah and submission to His command, and demonstrate the use of kind words when seeking knowledge, so that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would listen to their questions and pay attention to them.

This is how their behaviour and attitude should have been, but because their nature was not good, they turned away from that and Allah cast them away from His mercy because of their disbelief and stubbornness. Hence He said: ﴿But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, and only a few of them will believe﴾.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ آمِنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ وُجُوهًا فَنَرُدَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٧)

- 4:47. O you who have been given the scripture, believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you, before We obliterate faces and turn them backwards, or curse them as We cursed those who broke the Sabbath. Allah's will is always done.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, to believe in His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and in what Allah has revealed to him of the Holy Qur'an, which determines what is true in the previous Books that it confirmed because the previous Books foretold his coming, so when what was foretold came to pass, that was a confirmation of that foretelling.

Moreover, if they disbelieve in this Qur'an, that would mean that they disbelieved their own Books, because the Books of Allah confirm one another and are in harmony with one another. Hence the claim to believe in some of them but not others is a false claim that cannot be true.

﴿believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you﴾. This is encouraging them and informing them that they, of all people, should be the first to hasten to believe in the Qur'an, because of the knowledge with which Allah has blessed them and the Book which dictates that their responsibility is greater than that of others. Hence He warned them against failing to believe. ﴿before We obliterate faces and turn them backwards﴾. This is a requital that is in accordance with their deeds, because they abandoned the truth and preferred falsehood, and turned the facts upside down, regarding falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. Therefore their requital would be along similar lines: their faces would be obliterated as they had obliterated the truth, and their faces were to be turned backwards, so that their faces would be on the back of their heads, and this is the worst punishment.

﴿or curse them as We cursed those who broke the Sabbath﴾, by casting them far away from His mercy and punishing them by turning them into apes, as was done to their brethren who transgressed the Sabbath:

﴿...whereupon We said to them: Be apes, despised and rejected.﴾
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 65)

«Allah's will is always done». This is like the verse in which He says:

«His way, when He decrees a matter, is merely to say to it, 'Be!' and it is.» (Yâ Seen 36: 82)



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٨)

- 4:48. Allah does not forgive the ascription of partners to Him, but He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed devised a heinous sin.

Here Allah tells us that He will not forgive the sins of one who ascribes partners to Him, but He will forgive lesser sins, whether minor or major, according to His will, if forgiveness is dictated by His wisdom.

For sins that are less grave than ascribing partners to Him, Allah has ordained many means of attaining forgiveness, such as good deeds that erase sin and suffering calamities and pain that expiate for sin, in this world, in al-barzakh and on the Day of Resurrection; He has also ordained other ways, such as the supplication of the believers for one another, the intercession of those who will intercede and, over and above all that, His mercy of which those who believe and affirm His oneness are the most deserving.

In direct contrast to that is the ascription of partners to Him (shirk), for the one who ascribes partners to Him has closed to himself the gates of forgiveness and has barred the gates of mercy. So no act of worship and obedience will be of any benefit to him if it is lacking affirmation of Allah's oneness, and no calamity will benefit him at all, and on the Day of Resurrection he will have:

﴿...no one to intercede for us and no caring friend.﴾ (ash-Shu'arā' 26: 100-101)

Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed devised a heinous sin﴾ that is, he has committed a serious offense. What transgression can be greater than that of one who makes one who was created from dust, is lacking in all aspects and inherently dependent in all aspects, and has no power to benefit or harm himself – let alone the one who worships him – and no power to cause death, grant life or resurrect, equal with the Creator of all things, Who is perfect in all aspects and independent in and of Himself, with no need for any of His creation, in Whose Hand is the power to benefit or harm, give or withhold, and no blessing comes to His creation but it is from Him. Is there any worse transgression than that?

Hence He has made it inevitable that the one who commits this transgression will be punished eternally and deprived of reward.

﴿...Whoever ascribes partners to Allah, then Allah has forbidden paradise for him, and the fire will be his abode...﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 72)

This applies to the one who does not repent.

But for the one who repents, his ascription of partners to Allah, as well as his lesser sins, will be forgiven as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say [Allah says]: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning greatly], do not despair of the mercy of Allah, for verily Allah forgives all sins...﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 53)

That is, for the one who repents to Him.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۖ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُرْكِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾
 أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ يَقْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۖ وَكَفَى بِهِ إِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٩-٥٠)

- 4:49. Have you not seen those who claim purity for themselves? Nay, Allah purifies whomever He wills. They will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.
- 4:50. Look how they fabricate lies against Allah! This in itself is a flagrant sin.

Here Allah expresses amazement concerning His slaves and rebukes those among the Jews and Christians who claim purity for themselves and others of their ilk, saying that they are good and pure, praising themselves for something that is not true. That is because the Jews and Christians say:

﴿...We are children of Allah, and His beloved ones...﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 18)

– and:

﴿...No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 111)

But this is a mere claim for which there is no proof; rather proof is what the Qur'an says:

﴿Nay, whoever submits himself [completely] to Allah and is a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord; they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 112)

These are the ones whom Allah praises; hence He says here: ﴿Nay, Allah purifies whomever He wills﴾ that is, for their faith and righteous deeds, and for their ridding themselves of bad attitudes and acquiring good attitudes.

As for those people (the Jews, Christians and others) – even if they praise themselves by claiming that they are pure and that they are following something good, and that the reward will be theirs alone – they are lying; they have no share of the attributes of the pure because of their wrongdoing and disbelief, not because of any injustice on Allah's part. Hence He says: ﴿They will never be wronged even

by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone». This is in general terms; that is, they will not be wronged at all, and not even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.

«Look how they fabricate lies against Allah» that is, by praising themselves and saying that they are pure. This is one of the greatest kinds of fabricating lies against Allah, because the implication of their self-praise is the idea that Allah has made what they are following true and what the believing Muslims are following false, and this is one of the worst kinds of lie, which turns facts upside down by regarding truth as falsehood and falsehood as truth. Hence Allah says: «This in itself is a flagrant sin» that is, it is blatant and obvious, and it deserves a far-reaching and painful punishment.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَلْبَسُوا
وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَتُولَاءُ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَبِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَمَن يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَن مَّجْد لَهُ نَصِيرًا ﴿٥٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمَلَكِ فَإِذَا لَا يَأْتُونُ
النَّاسَ نَصِيرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا آلَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُم مُّلْكًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكَفَىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا
نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بِدَلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا
﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة النساء:

- 4:51. Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They believe in *jibt* and *ṭāghoot*,⁹ and they say to the disbelievers that they are more rightly guided than the believers as to the way.
- 4:52. Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed, and whomever Allah curses, you will not find any helper for him.
- 4:53. Or do they have a share in dominion? Even if [that were so], they would not give people as much as the speck on a date stone.
- 4:54. Or do they envy [other] people for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But We gave the family of Ibrâheem the scripture and wisdom, and gave them a great kingdom.
- 4:55. Some of them believed in him [Muhammad], and some of them turned away from him. [For the latter] hell will suffice as a raging fire.
- 4:56. [As for] those who reject Our revelations, We will cast them into fire; as often as their skins are burnt through, We will replace them with fresh skins, so that they may continue to taste the punishment. Verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.
- 4:57. But [as for] those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. There they will have pure spouses, and We shall admit them to cool refreshing shade.

This passage refers to some of the bad attitudes of the Jews and their envy of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers. The bad attitude and evil inclinations prompted them to give up belief in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and replace it with belief in *jibt* and *ṭāghoot*, which refers to believing in worship of anything other than Allah or ruling according to a system other than Islamic Sharia.

⁹ *Jibt* and *ṭāghoot*: these words may refer to everything that is worshipped instead of or alongside Allah, whether it is an idol, a stone, a grave, a devil or a human being; they may also refer to sorcery or witchcraft.

That includes magic, sorcery, worship of anything other than Allah, and obedience to the Shayṭān. All of that comes under the heading of jibt and ṭāghoot. Similarly, their disbelief and envy prompted them to prefer the way of those who disbelieve in Allah – the idol worshippers – to the path of the believers.

﴿and they say to the disbelievers﴾ that is, to appease them and flatter them, and out of hatred towards faith ﴿that they are more rightly guided than the believers as to the way﴾ that is, as to the path they follow. How foolish and stubborn they are, and how lacking in reason!

How could they follow this blameworthy path?

Do they think that this will be acceptable to any wise person or even that it would convince any ignorant person?

How could anyone prefer a religion based on idol worship and on the prohibition of good things and the allowing of evil and prohibited things, a religion that spreads injustice among people, regards the Creator as equal to created beings, and promotes disbelief in Allah and His messages and Books, over a religion that is based on worship of the Most Merciful and sincerity towards Allah in private and in public; rejection of anything that is worshipped besides Him, such as idols, rivals and liars; upholding ties of kinship; showing kindness to all of creation, including animals; establishing equity and fairness among people; prohibition of everything that is evil and unjust; and being honest in all words and deeds? Can this be anything but sheer insanity?

The one who has this preference is either one of the most ignorant of people and the most lacking in reason, or he is one of the most rebellious and stubborn in rejection of the truth.

These are the facts of the matter; hence Allah (ﷻ) says concerning them: ﴿Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed﴾ that is, He has expelled them from His mercy and sent His punishment upon them.

«and whomever Allah curses, you will not find any helper for him» that is, anyone to take care of him, be in charge of his affairs and protect him from harm. This is the utmost loss.

«Or do they have a share in dominion?» Such that they could give precedence to some over others, as they wish, on the basis of mere whims and desires. In that case they would be partners with Allah in running the affairs of His dominion. If they were like that, they would be miserly and stingy in the worst manner. Hence Allah says: «Even if [that were so], they would not give people as much as the speck on a date stone» that is, they would not give them anything, not even a little. This is a description of their extreme miserliness, assuming that they had a share in the dominion of Allah. This is said by way of a question to which the answer is clear, as it is well established in everyone's mind that they have no such share.

«Or do they envy [other] people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?» Is the motive for saying what they say their belief that they are partners with Allah and thus they give preference to whomever they will? Or is their motive envy of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the believers for what Allah has given them of His bounty, although His bestowal of that bounty is nothing out of the ordinary? «But We gave the family of Ibrâheem the scripture and wisdom, and gave them a great kingdom». This refers to what Allah bestowed upon Ibrâheem and his descendants of prophethood, scripture and kingship that He bestowed upon some of His Prophets, such as Dâwood and Sulaymân, and His blessing is still bestowed upon His believing slaves. So how could they resent His bestowal of prophethood, support and power upon Muhammad (ﷺ), the best of creation, the greatest, the one who knew Allah the most and feared Him the most?

«Some of them believed in him» that is, in Muhammad (ﷺ), and thus attained happiness in this world and success in the hereafter

﴿and some of them turned away from him﴾ out of stubbornness, resentment and envy; thus they were afflicted with suffering and calamities in this world, as a result of some of their sins.

﴿[For (them)] hell will suffice as a raging fire﴾ – it will rage around the one who disbelieves in Allah and denies the prophethood of His Prophets, be they Jews, Christians or other disbelievers.

Hence Allah says: ﴿[As for] those who reject Our revelations, We will cast them into fire﴾ which burns intensely and is extremely hot. ﴿as often as their skins are burnt through, We will replace them with fresh skins, so that they may continue to taste the punishment﴾ that is in order to make their pain and suffering reach a high level; as their disbelief and stubbornness occurred repeatedly until they became second nature to them, the punishment will be repeated accordingly, as a fair recompense. Hence Allah says: ﴿Verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has great power and wisdom in His creation and command, reward and punishment.

﴿But [as for] those who believe﴾ in Allah, and in what they are obliged to believe

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ both obligatory and encouraged (*mustahabb*)

﴿We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. There they will have pure spouses﴾ that is, they are free of bad attitudes and bad conduct and whatever may be found in the women of this world of impurity and defects

﴿and We shall admit them to cool refreshing shade﴾.



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٨-٥٩)

- 4:58. Verily Allah commands you to render back trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with justice. How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you! Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.
- 4:59. O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you [truly] believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more seemly in the end.

What is meant by «trusts» is anything with which a person is entrusted and enjoined to take care of it. Allah instructs His slaves to render back those trusts, that is, to fulfil them completely and faithfully, and not to detract from them in any way or delay their return. These trusts include positions of authority, wealth and property, secrets, and matters which no one sees except Allah.

The fuqahâ' have stated that whoever is entrusted with something is obliged to protect it by keeping it in a place where such things are usually kept. They said that this is because it is not possible to fulfil that trust and return that thing when required except by keeping it safe; hence doing so is obligatory.

The phrase «to those to whom they are due» indicates that the thing entrusted should not be given to anyone other than the one who entrusted it to him, and his appointed deputy is of the same standing as him. If he gives it to someone other than its rightful owner then he is not being honest with regard to that with which he was entrusted. «and when you judge between people, to judge with justice» – this includes judging between them in cases of blood (murder or injury), wealth or property, and honour, whether the matter is great or small,

and whether the people involved are relatives or otherwise, righteous or evil, friends or enemies. What is meant by the justice with which Allah enjoins us to judge is that which He has prescribed on the lips of His Messenger (ﷺ) of limits and rulings. This requires knowledge of the principles of justice in order to judge thereby. Because these are good and just commands, Allah says: ﴿How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you! Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing﴾. Here Allah is praising His commands and prohibitions, because they bring benefits and ward off harm, both in this world and in the hereafter, for the One Who prescribed them is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, from Whom nothing is hidden, and He knows what is in the best interests of His slaves better than they do.

Then Allah instructs us to obey Him and to obey His Messenger (ﷺ), by doing that which they command, doing what is obligatory and encouraged, and avoiding that which they prohibit. He also instructs us to obey those in authority, such as rulers, governors and scholars, because people's religious and worldly affairs cannot be put in order except by obeying those who are in authority, in obedience to Allah and seeking that which is with Him. But that is on condition that they do not enjoin disobedience to Allah; if they do so, then there should not be any obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience towards the Creator. Perhaps this is the reason why the verb ('obey') is not repeated with regard to those who are in authority, but it is mentioned with regard to the Messenger (ﷺ). That is because the Messenger (ﷺ) only enjoins obedience to Allah, and whoever obeys him has obeyed Allah; but when it comes to those who are in authority, the command to obey them is stipulated on condition that it does not involve any sin.

Then Allah instructs us to refer anything concerning which people dispute, of major or minor matters of religion, to Allah and to His Messenger (ﷺ); in other words, to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), for in them are final, decisive answers to all

matters of dispute, either in a clear and specific text, or on the basis of the general meaning of the text, or on the basis of a hint or indication, or of a concept or a general principle to which analogy may be made for similar cases. That is because the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) form the basis of the religion and faith cannot be sound unless it is based on both. Hence referring to both is a condition of faith, and this is why Allah says «if you [truly] believe in Allah and the Last Day». This indicates that whoever does not refer to them concerning controversial matters is not really a believer; rather he is a believer in *laghoot*, as mentioned in the following verse.

«that», namely referring to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) «is better and more seemly in the end», because the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) is the best and most just of rulings, and is in the best interests of people in their religious and worldly affairs and in the hereafter.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَحْبَبْتَهُمْ مُعْصِيَةً بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا ﴿٦٢﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٠-٦٣)

4:60. Have you not seen those who claim to believe in the Revelation sent down to you [O Muhammad], and in that which was sent down before your time, yet they want to refer for judgement

to *tāghoot*,¹⁰ even though they were commanded to reject it? Shayṭān wants to lead them far astray.

4:61. When it is said to them: Come to the Revelation that Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger, – you see the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion.

4:62. How will it be, if calamity befalls them because of the deeds which their own hands have sent forth? Then they will come to you, swearing by Allah: We only wanted to do good and bring about reconciliation!

4:63. Those are the ones of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts; so turn away from them, but admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach their very souls.

Here Allah tells His slaves how strange the situation of the hypocrites is, «those who claim» to believe in that which the Messenger (ﷺ) has brought and what came before it, yet despite that, «they want to refer for judgement to *tāghoot*». This word refers to anyone who judges by something other than that which Allah has revealed. This is at the time when «they were commanded to reject it», so how can this be reconciled with faith? For faith requires submission to the laws of Allah and acceptance of His ruling in all affairs. Hence the one who claims to be a believer, but chooses the ruling of *tāghoot* over the ruling of Allah, is lying. This is one of the ways in which the Shayṭān misguides them; hence Allah says: «Shayṭān wants to lead them far astray» from the truth.

«How» will the situation of these misguided ones be «if calamity befalls them because of the deeds which their own hands have sent forth», namely their sins, which include referring for judgement to *tāghoot*?

¹⁰ In this context, *tāghoot* refers to any set of laws or legislation other than Islamic Sharia.

«Then they will come to you» apologising for what they have done, saying: «We only wanted to do good and bring about reconciliation!» that is, our only intention in doing that was to be kind to both disputing parties and bring about reconciliation between them. But they are lying, because the best of good deeds is to refer to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) for judgement.

«...But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?» (al-Mā'idah 5: 50)

Hence Allah says: «Those are the ones of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts» of hypocrisy and bad intentions
 «so turn away from them» that is, do not worry about them and do not react to anything that they do or say
 «but admonish them» that is, explain to them the ruling of Allah (ﷻ), encourage them to submit to Him and warn them against not doing so
 «and speak to them a word to reach their very souls» that is, advise them in private, between you and them, for that is more likely to succeed, and be extremely emphatic in rebuking them and stopping them from what they are doing. This indicates that the one who commits sins, even if he is to be overlooked publicly, is to be admonished privately in the sternest terms, in whatever manner is thought most likely to achieve the goal.



﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٤-٦٥)

- 4:64. We did not send any Messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's leave. If only they had, when they wronged themselves, come to you and asked Allah for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful.
- 4:65. But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, then find in their hearts no reservations about your verdicts, but accept them wholeheartedly.

Here Allah is making a statement which includes the command and encouragement to obey the Messenger (ﷺ), and explains that the purpose behind sending the Messengers was that they should be obeyed; those to whom they were sent should obey them in all that they enjoin and forbid, and respect them as one who obeys respects the one whom he obeys.

This is confirmation of the infallibility of the Messengers with regard to that which they convey from Allah, and in all that they enjoin and forbid, because Allah has enjoined obedience to them in general terms. Were it not for the fact that they are infallible and do not enjoin anything wrong, obedience to them would not have been prescribed in general terms.

«{by Allah's leave}» that is, the obedience of the one who obeys comes about by the will and decree of Allah. This is an affirmation of the divine will and decree, and encouragement to seek the help of Allah. It also tells us that no one can obey the Messenger (ﷺ) unless Allah helps him.

Then Allah tells us of His great generosity and munificence, and His call to the one who commits evil deeds to admit it, repent and seek the forgiveness of Allah.

«{If only they had, when they wronged themselves, come to you}» that is, admitting their sins with humility

ﷺ and asked Allah for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He would have accepted their repentance and forgiven their wrongdoing; He would have shown them mercy by accepting their repentance, enabling them to repent and rewarding them for doing so. This coming to the Messenger (ﷺ) was applicable only during his lifetime, because this is what is indicated by the context; the Messenger's prayers for forgiveness could only happen as long as he was alive. After his death he is not to be asked for anything; in fact that comes under the heading of ascribing a partner to Allah (shirk).

Then Allah swears by His divine Self that they will not be believers until they refer for judgement to His Messenger (ﷺ) in all their disputes, that is in all matters concerning which there is disagreement. This is unlike matters concerning which there is consensus, because consensus can only be based on Qur'an and Sunnah. Moreover, referring matters to the judgement of Sharia cannot be sufficient until there are no reservations whatsoever in their hearts and they refer to it in a state of full submission. Furthermore, that cannot be sufficient until they accept His ruling wholeheartedly, willingly and with submission both outward and inward.

Referring to the rule of Sharia reflects the soundness of one's commitment to Islam; having no reservations about it reflects the soundness of one's faith; and acceptance of it reflects the soundness of one's ihsân. Whoever attains soundness in all these matters, his commitment to religion is sound in all aspects; whoever turns away from this ruling, not accepting it, is a disbeliever; and whoever turns away even though he accepts it in principle, comes under the same rulings as other sinners like him.



﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ أَخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا ۖ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ لَدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ وَلَهْدَيْنَهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٦-٦٨)

- 4:66. If We were to instruct them: Kill yourselves, or: Leave your homes, they would not do so, except for a few of them. But if they did what they were instructed to do, it would indeed be better for them, and would increase them in steadfastness;
- 4:67. And then We would indeed grant them an immense reward of Our own;
- 4:68. and We would indeed guide them to a straight path.

Here Allah tells us that if He were to instruct them to do something that people find very difficult, such as killing themselves or leaving their homes, none would do it except a few of them. Therefore they should be grateful to Him that what He has instructed them to do is easy for everyone, and is not difficult to do.

This indicates that one should think of the hardships and difficulties that He could have put him through, so that he will realise that the enjoined acts of worship are in fact very easy, and this will increase him in praise and gratitude to his Lord.

Then Allah states that they should do what they are exhorted to do, which is what is enjoined as a regular practice at various times, focusing on it properly and doing their best to carry it out perfectly, not letting themselves be distracted by other issues that are out of reach and are not expected of them. So each individual should focus on what he is expected to do here and now, and strive to do it perfectly; then gradually he will advance until he reaches the level of knowledge and

action that is decreed for him in both his spiritual and worldly affairs. This is in contrast to the one who aspires to a level that is beyond his reach and that is not yet enjoined upon him, for he will hardly be able to reach that level because he lacks focus, is lazy and does not have the necessary energy. Then Allah tells us that four good consequences will result from doing what they are instructed to do:

- 1- Attaining goodness or that which is better: ﴿it would indeed be better for them﴾ that is, then they would be among the people who acquire those good qualities by doing the good deeds that they are instructed to do, by means of which they will avoid the qualities of bad people, because the affirmation of a thing is the negation of its opposite.
- 2- Becoming steadfast and increasing in steadfastness. Allah makes those who believe steadfast because of the faith they have, which prompts them to do what they are instructed and exhorted to do. Thus He makes them steadfast in the life of this world, when there arise confusion and discouragement regarding the commands and prohibitions, as well as calamities. Hence they become steadfast and are helped and guided to do that which is enjoined and to refrain from that which is forbidden, which is what is required of them. And at times of calamity, which it is hard for people to go through, they will be guided and helped to be steadfast and patient, and to accept (the divine decree) or show gratitude.

Help from Allah will come down to enable them achieve that and to make them steadfast in adhering to their religion, at the time of death, and in the grave.

Moreover, the one who does that which is enjoined upon him keeps training himself to adhere to the teachings of Islam until that becomes second nature to him, and it becomes something very dear to him. That will also help him to be steadfast in doing acts of worship and obedience.

- 3- ﴿And then We would indeed grant them an immense reward of Our own﴾ that is, in this world and in the hereafter, both spiritual and physical, as well as the everlasting delights of paradise, which no eye has ever seen, no ear has heard, and it has not crossed the mind of any human.
- 4- Guidance to the straight path: this is a general statement after having mentioned something specific, because of the virtue of guidance to the straight path, which includes knowledge of the truth, love thereof, giving it precedence and acting upon it. All happiness and success depends on that, so the one who is guided to the straight path has been helped to do all that is good and has been protected from every kind of evil.



﴿وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا ۚ﴾ (٦٩) ذَلِكَ
الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا ۝ (٧٠)﴾ (سورة النساء: ٦٩-٧٠)

- 4:69. Those who obey Allah and the Messenger are the ones who will be with those whom Allah has blessed of the Prophets, the strong and true in faith, the martyrs and the righteous; what excellent companions these are!
- 4:70. That grace is from Allah; and sufficient is Allah as Knower.¹¹

That is, everyone – male or female, young or old – who obeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), according to his situation and what is required of him, these ﴿are the ones who will be with those whom Allah has blessed﴾. This refers to the great blessing which leads to perfection, success and happiness

¹¹ As He knows who is deserving of reward and the extent thereof.

﴿of the Prophets﴾ to whom Allah gave precedence by means of His revelation and by sending them as Messengers to His creation to call them to Allah (ﷻ).

﴿the strong and true in faith﴾ – they are the ones who reached the highest level of belief in that which the Messengers brought; they recognised the truth and were certain of it, and they acted in accordance with it in word and deed, in attitude, and in calling others to Allah
 ﴿the martyrs﴾ who fought in Allah's cause so that the word of Allah would be supreme, and were killed

﴿and the righteous﴾ – those who were righteous both outwardly and inwardly, thus their deeds became righteous. Anyone who obeys Allah (ﷻ) will be with these people and one of their number

﴿what excellent companions these are!﴾ And how excellent it will be to be with them in the gardens of bliss, and to have the joy of their company, in nearness to the Lord of the worlds.

﴿That grace﴾ which they attain ﴿is from Allah﴾, for He is the One Who guided them to that, helped them to attain it, and granted them reward far greater than their deeds deserve

﴿and sufficient is Allah as Knower﴾ – He knows the condition of His slaves and who among them is deserving of this great reward because of the righteous deeds that he did with all sincerity.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانْفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ اَنْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا ۖ وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَنْ لَّيُبْتَغَىٰ فَنَاصِبَهُ ۖ قَالَ قَدْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَهِيدًا ۖ وَلَئِنْ أَصَبَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يَلْبِسَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۖ﴾ ﴿فَلْيَقْتَتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾

الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ
أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧١-٧٤)

- 4:71. O you who believe! Take your precautions, then either go forth [on military expeditions] in small groups or go forth all together.
- 4:72. There is certainly among you he who would lag behind [and not join the expedition], then if calamity strikes you, he will say: Allah has blessed me in that I was not present with them.
- 4:73. And if some bounty comes to you from Allah, he will certainly say – as if there had never been any friendship between you and him: Would that I had been with them; I would have made great gains!
- 4:74. Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. For the one who fights in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or attains victory, soon We will grant him an immense reward.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves to take precautions against their disbelieving enemies. That includes using all means that will help them to fight them and ward off their attacks, such as: constructing fortifications and ditches; learning how to shoot and ride; learning other skills that will help to achieve that; learning all means of finding out about their comings and goings and their plans; and mobilising in Allah's cause.

Hence He says: ﴿then either go forth [on military expeditions] in small groups﴾ that is, separately, so that one company or battalion goes out and others stay behind ﴿or go forth all together﴾. All of that is to be determined according to what will best achieve the purpose, lead to the defeat of the enemy and support the Muslims and their religion. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Make ready against them all that you can of [military] power...﴾
(*al-Anfâl* 8: 60)

Then He speaks of those who are weak in faith and reluctant to engage in jihad: ﴿There is certainly among you﴾, O believers, ﴿he who would lag behind﴾ this refers to those who lack energy and motivation to engage in jihad in Allah's cause because of weakness, lethargy and cowardice. This is the correct interpretation.

It was also suggested that the Arabic wording of this phrase may mean that they cause others to lag behind; in other words, they discourage others from fighting. This refers to the hypocrites. However, the former view is more likely to be correct, for two reasons:

- 1- The phrase ﴿among you﴾; this is addressed to the believers.
- 2- In the following verse, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿as if there had never been any friendship between you and him﴾. Allah has severed any bond of friendship between the disbelievers, both polytheists and hypocrites, and the believers. Moreover, this reflects reality, because the believers fall into two groups: (i) those who are sincere in their faith, whose sincerity stemmed from strong belief and was proven in jihad; and (ii) those who were weak, who had entered Islam but their faith was weak and they were not strong enough to engage in jihad, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿The Bedouin say: We believe. Say: You have not [yet] believed. Rather you should say: We have submitted [in Islam], for faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not detract from the reward of any of your deeds...﴾ (*al-Hujurât* 49: 14)

Then He mentions the aims of these people who are reluctant to join in jihad and what they care about most; their main aim is worldly interests and accumulation of wealth.

﴿then if calamity﴾ namely defeat and being slain, and the enemy gaining the upper hand in some situations, for reasons known only to Allah

﴿strikes you, he﴾ that is, the one who lags behind, ﴿will say: Allah has blessed me in that I was not present with them﴾. Because of their lack of reason and weakness of faith, they think that staying behind and not taking part in the jihad in which this calamity occurred is a blessing; they do not realise that the true blessing is being guided and helped to do this great act of obedience by means of which faith is strengthened, and the individual is saved from punishment and loss, attains great reward and earns the good pleasure of Allah, the Most Generous, the Bestower. As for lagging behind, even if it does bring a little ease, it will be followed by lengthy toil and great pain, and will lead to missing out on that which is attained by those who engage in jihad.

﴿And if some bounty comes to you from Allah﴾ that is, victory and booty

﴿he will certainly say – as if there had never been any friendship between you and him: Would that I had been with them; I would have made great gains!﴾ That is, he will wish that he had been present so that he could have gotten some of the booty; he has no other desire or aim apart from that. It is as if he was not one of you, O believers, and between you and him there is no friendship based on faith, the nature of which dictates that the believers should be united in all that is in their best interests and will ward off harm from them; they rejoice when their aims are attained, even if that happens at the hands of other brothers in faith, and they feel pain when that does not happen; they strive all together in any effort that is aimed at achieving their interests, both religious and worldly. But this one who wishes only for worldly gain does not have that spirit of faith.

By His kindness towards His slaves, Allah does not cut them off completely from His mercy and He does not close that door to them;

rather in the case of one who behaves in a manner that is not befitting, He calls him to make up for his shortcomings and mend his ways. Hence He instructed these people to be sincere and to go out and strive in His cause: ﴿Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter﴾. This is one of the opinions concerning the meaning of this verse, and it is the soundest opinion.

It was also suggested that what is meant is: let the believers whose faith is complete and sincere strive in the cause of Allah, namely ﴿those ... who sell the life of this world for the hereafter﴾ that is, they sell this world and turn away from it, seeking the hereafter instead.

These are the ones to whom these words are addressed, because they are the ones who have prepared themselves and are ready to strive in jihad against the enemy, because of the perfect faith which prompts them to do that.

As for those who lag behind, no one should worry about them, whether they go out or stay behind, because this is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it,¹² when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ (*al-Isrā'* 17: 107)

﴿...If these people [the Makkans] disbelieve therein, then We have entrusted it to a people who do not disbelieve therein.﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 89)

﴿For the one who fights in the cause of Allah﴾, on condition that it is a type of jihad that is enjoined by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and that the individual's intention is sincerely for the sake of Allah alone, seeking His Countenance,

﴿whether he is slain or attains victory, soon We will grant him an immense reward﴾ namely increased faith and religious commitment, booty, being highly spoken of, and the reward of those who strive in

¹² Namely the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).

jihad in Allah's cause that Allah has prepared for them in paradise, which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it crossed the mind of man.



﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٥)

4:75. And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and for the oppressed men, women, and children who say: Our Lord! Bring us forth from this city, whose people are wrongdoers; give us by Your grace a protector and give us by Your grace a helper?

Here Allah encourages His believing slaves to fight in His cause and informs them that this is an individual obligation for them, and He criticises heavily those among them who refrain from doing that, as He says ﴿And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah﴾ at the time when the oppressed men, women and children, who have no means in their power and do not know where to go (*cf.* 4: 98), have suffered the greatest oppression from their enemies as a result.

So they (the oppressed believers) are calling upon Allah to bring them out of this city whose people are wronging themselves by disbelieving and ascribing partners to Allah, and they are wronging the believers by persecuting them, trying to bar them from the path of Allah, and preventing them from calling others to their religion and migrating. And they are calling upon Allah to give them a supporter and helper, to save them from this city whose people are wrongdoers. Because of this situation, their jihad is one of fighting and defending their families, children and relatives; it is not a jihad initiated by the

Muslims for the purpose of defeating the disbelievers. Even though there is great virtue in that, and the one who stays behind from that jihad is to be rebuked in the strongest terms, jihad that is aimed at saving the oppressed is greater in reward and is more beneficial, because it is warding off the enemy.



﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا
أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٦)

4:76. Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of *ṭāghoot*.¹³ So fight against the allies of Shayṭān; feeble indeed is the scheming of Shayṭān.

Here Allah tells us that the believers fight in His cause, ﴿and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of *ṭāghoot*﴾ that is, the Shayṭān. We learn a number of lessons from this:

- The individual's participation in jihad is commensurate with his level of faith in Allah, sincerity and commitment. Jihad in Allah's cause is one of the signs, requirements and results of faith, just as fighting in the cause of *ṭāghoot* is one of the branches and results of disbelief.
- The one who fights in Allah's cause is expected to show patience and perseverance to a degree that others do not have. If the supporters of Shayṭān can persevere with patience and fight, even though they follow falsehood, then it is more appropriate that the people of truth should do that, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships;

¹³ In this context, *ṭāghoot* refers to Shayṭān.

but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for» (4: 104).

- The one who fights in Allah's cause is relying on a strong foundation, for he has truth on his side and he puts his trust in Allah. The one who is in a position of power and has a strong support is expected to persevere with patience and energy in a manner that is not expected of one who fights to defend falsehood that has no basis in reality and for which no good outcome can be expected. Hence Allah says: «So fight against the allies of Shayṭān; feeble indeed is the scheming of Shayṭān».

The word translated here as «scheming» refers to using hidden ways to harm the enemy. But no matter how far the scheming of the Shayṭān may go, it is ultimately weak, as it cannot stand up to anything of the truth or to the support of Allah for His believing slaves.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالُ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشِيدَةٍ... ﴿٧٨﴾﴾ (سورة

(النساء: ٧٧-٧٨)

- 4:77. Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Restrain your hands [from fighting], establish regular prayer and give zakāh? But then when fighting was ordained for them, some of them feared men as much as they feared Allah or even more. They said: Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us? Could You not have given us a brief respite? Say: The enjoyment of this world is short-lived; the hereafter will be better for one who

fears Allah. You will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone.

4:78. Wherever you are, death will overtake you, even if you are in fortified towers!...

When the Muslims were in Makkah, they were instructed to pray and give zakâh in the sense of helping the poor, not the well-known zakâh that becomes due when a minimum threshold of wealth is reached and its conditions are met; that zakâh was not enjoined until after they migrated to Madinah. Also, they were not instructed to fight in jihâd against their enemies, for a number of reasons:

- By His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) prescribed laws and acts of worship for His slaves in a way that would not be difficult for them; so He started with the most important then the next most important, and the easiest then the next easiest.
- If He had enjoined them to fight when they were few in number and lacking resources, whilst their enemies were numerous, that would have led to the destruction of Islam. Therefore the greatest interest of Islam was given precedence over lesser interests; and there were others reasons.

Some of the believers wished that fighting would be enjoined upon them at that stage, but it was not appropriate at that time. Rather what was appropriate was to do what they were instructed to do at that time, such as affirming the oneness of Allah, praying, giving charity and so on, as Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿But if they did what they were instructed to do, it would indeed be better for them, and would increase them in steadfastness﴾ (4: 66).

Then when they migrated to Madinah and Islam grew stronger, fighting was prescribed for them at the appropriate time.

Some of those who had wanted to hasten the matter of fighting before that said, out of fear of the people and weakness: ﴿Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us?﴾. This was an expression

of their resentment towards the ruling of jihad and their objection to Allah. It is as if they should have done the opposite of that, namely submitting to the command of Allah and showing patience in heeding His commands. But (when it was prescribed) they did the opposite of what was required of them and said: «Could You not have given us a brief respite?». That is, why was the command to fight not delayed until some other time? This is the attitude of many people who are not mature in their way of thinking and tend to be hasty, but are most likely not to be able to show patience when the time comes and are unable to shoulder responsibility; rather they are lacking in patience.

Then Allah admonishes them not to adopt such an attitude which leads to them staying behind and not joining the fight: «Say: The enjoyment of this world is short-lived; the hereafter will be better for one who fears Allah» that is, the time for enjoying pleasure and ease in this world is short; putting up with some difficulty in doing acts of worship and obedience to Allah for a short time is something that is easy to do, because if you know that the difficulty you are facing will not last for long, that makes it easier to bear. So how about if you compare this world and the hereafter? For the hereafter is better than this world in and of itself, and with regard to its pleasures and how long it will endure.

In and of itself, it is as the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the sound hadith: «A space the size of a whip in paradise is better than this world and everything in it.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

In and of itself, it is pure and free of any annoyance. Whatever pleasure of any kind that may cross one's mind, the pleasure of paradise is superior to it, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«No soul knows what is kept hidden in store for them of delight as a reward for what they used to do.» (as-Sajdah 32: 17)

And Allah said on the lips of His Prophet (ﷺ):

«I have prepared for My righteous slaves that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

As for the pleasures of this world, they are mixed with all kinds of annoyances and troubles which, if you compare the pleasures of this world with what accompanies them of pain, worry and distress, you will find that the distress outweighs the pleasure.

With regard to time, this world will come to an end and man's lifespan – in comparison to this world – is very short. But the hereafter is eternal bliss in which its people will abide forever. If the wise person thinks about these two realms and envisages them properly, he will realise which should take precedence, and which he should seek and strive for. Hence Allah says: «the hereafter will be better for one who fears Allah» that is, one who avoids ascribing partners to Him and all other prohibited actions.

«You will never be wronged even by as much as the thread in the groove of a date stone» that is, what you did of striving for the hereafter you will find complete, with nothing missing from it.

Then Allah tells us that erring on the side of caution will not save you from what He has decreed, and that staying behind will not ward off any harm (that is decreed):

«Wherever you are, death will overtake you» that is, at any time and in any place

«even if you are in fortified towers» that is, strong fortresses and high places.

All of this is to encourage striving in jihad in Allah's cause, sometimes by highlighting its virtues and reward, sometimes by warning about the punishment for not doing it, sometimes by pointing out that those who stayed behind will not benefit from doing so, and sometimes by making it easy to do it.



﴿... وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴾ (٧٨) مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

﴿٧٨﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٨-٧٩)

- 4:78. ... If some good befalls them, they say: This is from Allah; but if misfortune befalls them, they say: This is from you [O Muhammad]. Say: All things are from Allah. But what is the matter with these people, that they can hardly understand a word?
- 4:79. Whatever good befalls you is from Allah; but whatever misfortune befalls you is from yourself. We have sent you [O Muhammad] to humankind as a Messenger. And sufficient is Allah as a witness.

Here Allah tells us about those who do not know, those who turn away from what the Messengers brought and oppose them: if something good comes to them, such as a good harvest, abundant wealth, many offspring and good health, they say: «This is from Allah». But if something bad befalls them, such as drought, poverty, sickness, or the death of their children and loved ones, they say: «This is from you [O Muhammad]» that is, because of that which you have brought us, O Muhammad (ﷺ).

They regarded the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as 'inauspicious' or an 'evil omen', just as others of their ilk did with the previous Messengers of Allah. Allah tells us that the people of Pharaoh said to Moosâ:

«Whenever good fortune came their way, they said: This is our due. But when bad fortune befell them, they ascribed it to the evil auspices of Moosâ and those who were with him...» (*al-A'râf* 7: 131)

The people of Şâlih said:

«... We regard you and those who are with you as an evil omen...» (*an-Naml* 27: 47)

The people mentioned in Soorat Yâ Seen said to their Messengers:

«... We regard you as an evil omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you...» (*Yâ Seen* 36: 18)

Because they shared a common disbelief, their words and deeds were similar. All those who attributed the occurrence of bad things or the disappearance of good things to that which the Messengers brought, or part of it, were included in this stern rebuke.

In response to them, Allah said: «Say: All things» both good and bad, «are from Allah» that is, they happen by His will and decree, and His power of creation.

«But what is the matter with these people» that is those who uttered these false words

«that they can hardly understand a word?» That is, they do not understand anything at all and they do not even come close to understanding it, or they only have a little understanding of it.

Whatever the case, this is a criticism and a rebuke addressed to them for their failure to understand what Allah and His Messenger say. That is because of their disbelief and turning away. This is implicit praise for the one who does understand what Allah and His Messenger say, and it is encouragement to do so and to look for means that will help to achieve that, such as focusing on their words and pondering them, and taking measures to understand them. If they had understood what Allah said, they would have realised that both good and bad, good deeds and bad deeds, all come about by the will and decree of Allah, and no one is excluded from that; the Messengers are not the

cause of anything bad and neither is the message they brought, because they were sent for the good of people in this world and the hereafter, and for the good of their religious commitment.

﴿Whatever good befalls you﴾ in terms of both spiritual and worldly interests

﴿is from Allah﴾ it is He Who blesses with it and makes means of attaining it easy.

﴿but whatever misfortune befalls you﴾ in terms of both spiritual and worldly interests

﴿is from yourself﴾ that is, because of your sins and what you have earned, but what Allah forgives is far greater.

Allah (ﷻ) has opened the gates of kindness to His slaves, and He has commanded them to implement the means that will lead to His bounty and grace. He informs them that sins form an impediment to His grace, so if a person commits sins, he has no one to blame but himself, because he is preventing himself from attaining the bounty and grace of Allah.

Then Allah tells us of the universal nature of the message of His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿We have sent you [O Muhammad] to humankind as a Messenger. And sufficient is Allah as a witness﴾ that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ), because of what He has given you of His support, powerful miracles and clear proof. This is the greatest testimony of all, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Say: Whose testimony carries the most weight? Say: It is Allah's; He is witness between me and you...﴾ (*al-An'âm* 6: 19)

Thus we realise that Allah (ﷻ) is perfect in knowledge, perfect in power, and great in wisdom; Allah supported His Messenger (ﷺ) and granted him great victories, by virtue of which we may be certain that he is the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ).



﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۖ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظًا ۚ﴾
 ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ
 وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُنِيسُونَ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾ (سورة

النساء: ٨٠-٨١)

- 4:80. Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah. But if any turn away, We have not sent you to be their keeper.
- 4:81. They profess obedience, but as soon as they leave you, some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate. Allah records all their plots, so ignore them, and put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

That is, everyone who obeys the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regard to what he enjoins and what he prohibits «has obeyed Allah», because the Messenger (ﷺ) does not enjoin anything or forbid anything except in accordance with the commands, laws, inspiration and Revelation of Allah. This proves that the Messenger (ﷺ) is infallible, because Allah has enjoined obedience to him in all cases; were it not that he is infallible in all that he conveys from Allah, Allah would not have enjoined us to obey him in all cases and praised him for that.

This is one of the rights that are shared by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). There are three types of rights: rights of Allah (ﷻ) alone, which are not shared with any of His creation, namely worshipping Allah alone, turning to Him alone, and so on; rights which belong exclusively to the Messenger (ﷺ), such as respecting him, honouring him and helping him; and rights that are shared by both, such as believing in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), loving them both and obeying them both, as Allah mentioned in the verse:

﴿So that you [O people] may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and support and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and afternoon.﴾
(*al-Fath* 48: 9)

So whoever obeys the Messenger (ﷺ) has obeyed Allah, and he will have the reward that results from obedience to Allah.

﴿But if any turn away﴾ from obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), he harms only himself and he does not harm Allah in the slightest
﴿We have not sent you to be their keeper﴾ that is, to record their deeds and condition; rather We have sent you to convey, explain and give sincere advice. You have done what was required of you and your reward is due from Allah, whether they are guided or not, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So admonish [O Muhammad], for you are but sent to admonish; you have no power over them.﴾ (*al-Ghāshiyah* 88: 21-22)

It is essential that obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) be both outward and inward, in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) and otherwise. If anyone makes an outward show of obedience and commitment in his presence, then when he is on his own or with others of his ilk, he fails to be obedient and does the opposite, then the outward obedience that he shows is of no benefit whatsoever, and he is more like those of whom Allah says: ﴿They profess obedience﴾ that is, they make an outward display of obedience when they are with you (O Prophet ﷺ),

﴿but as soon as they leave you﴾ that is, depart and go somewhere where no one can see them,

﴿some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate﴾ that is, they plan in secret something contrary to obedience to you; in that case it can be nothing other than disobedience and sin.

﴿some of them plot in secret something other than what you advocate﴾ – these words indicate that what they have decided to do is something other than obedience, because they are planning in secret to do something that they have already decided upon.

Then Allah issues a warning to those who do that: «Allah records all their plots» that is, He is recording it against them and He will requite them for it in full. This is a warning to them.

Then He instructs His Messenger (ﷺ) to respond by ignoring them and not to rebuke them, for they will not harm him in the slightest if he puts his trust in Allah and seeks His help in supporting His religion and establishing His laws. Hence He says: «so ignore them, and put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs».



﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴾

(سورة النساء: ٨٢)

- 4:82. Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions.

Here Allah enjoins pondering His Book, which means contemplating the meaning and studying its principles and lessons intensely, along with whatever helps to achieve that aim. Pondering the Book of Allah is the key to knowledge, and all that is good and all types of knowledge may be found therein. By doing that, faith will increase and become deeply rooted in the heart.

For the Qur'an teaches us about the Lord whom we worship, and His attributes of perfection, and that He is to be declared above all shortcomings. It sets out for us the route that leads to Him and describes the characteristics of the people who follow it, and what they will attain when they come to Him. It informs us of our real enemy and tells us of the path that will lead to punishment, and describes the characteristics of the people who follow it and how they will be dealt with when there is a reason for which they should be punished.

The more we ponder the Book, the more we will increase in knowledge, good deeds and insight. Hence Allah has enjoined and encouraged doing so, and He tells us that this is the purpose for which the Qur'an was revealed, as He says elsewhere:

﴿This is a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may ponder its verses, and so that people of understanding may pay heed.﴾ (Sâd 38: 29)

– and:

﴿Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an, or are there locks on their hearts?﴾ (Muhammad 47: 24)

One of the benefits of pondering over the Book of Allah is that it causes the individual to become certain in faith and knowledge that it is the words of Allah, because parts of it confirm other parts, and its parts are in harmony with one another. Hence you will see rulings, stories and narratives repeated in several places in the Qur'an, all of them in harmony, confirming one another and not contradicting one another. Thus it is known that the Qur'an is perfect and that it comes from One Whose knowledge encompasses all things. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions﴾ that is, because it comes from Allah, there are no contradictions in it at all.



﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٣)

- 4:83. When they hear any news, whether it is of a reassuring or disquieting nature, they make it known to all and sundry, whereas if they referred it to the Messenger and those in authority among

them, those who sought news could learn it from them. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, all but a few of you would have followed Shayṭān.

Here Allah chides His slaves for doing something that is not befitting, and teaches them that when news comes to them of any important matter and any matter that affects the public interest and has to do with reassurance and the joy of the believers, or some disquieting matter that may signal bad news, they must verify it and not hasten to spread that news. Rather they must refer to the Messenger (ﷺ) and to the people in authority, people of wisdom, knowledge, sincerity, reason and maturity, who know about things and what is and is not in the public interest.

Then if it is determined that there is some interest to be served by broadcasting the news, and that it will encourage the believers and make them happy, or it will alert the Muslims to some plot of their enemies, in that case they may go ahead and broadcast the news. But if they determine that there is no interest to be served, or that there is some slight interest but the harm it will cause outweighs that interest, then they should not broadcast it. Hence Allah says: «those who sought news could learn it from them» that is, because they will be learning it from those who have examined the matter on the basis of their mature thinking and knowledge.

This points to a basic principle of manners and attitude, which is that if there is to be a discussion concerning any matter, it should be referred to those who are qualified to discuss it, and no one should try to pre-empt them, because this is more likely to develop the right understanding of the issue and to lead to sound decision-making and avoidance of error. It also indicates that it is not allowed to be hasty in spreading news as soon as it is heard; rather what is enjoined is to think about it and see whether it is beneficial, in which case one may go ahead and broadcast it, otherwise one should refrain from doing so.

Then Allah says: «Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you» that is, in guiding you, and teaching you proper etiquette, and teaching you that which you did not know, «all but a few of you would have followed Shaytân» because man by nature is prone to wrongdoing and ignorance, and his own self only prompts him to do evil. But if he turns to his Lord, seeks His protection and strives hard in doing so, his Lord will be kind to him, guide him to all that is good and protect him from the accursed Shaytân.



﴿فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِ بِأَسْ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسْوَأَشَدَّ تَنْكِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٤)

4:84. So fight [O Muhammad] in Allah's cause; you are accountable only for yourself. But urge the believers [to fight]. It may be that Allah will curb the might of those who disbelieve; for Allah is strongest in might and severest in punishment.

This is the best state that a person can be in, when he strives to make himself comply with the commands of Allah concerning jihad and otherwise, and to urge others to do likewise. A person may not be able to achieve one or both of these things, hence Allah says to His Messenger (ﷺ): «So fight [O Muhammad] in Allah's cause; you are accountable only for yourself» that is, you have no power over anyone else, so you will never be held accountable for the deeds of anyone else.

«But urge the believers» to fight. This includes everything that encourages the believers to be active and strengthens their resolve, by highlighting their strength and telling them that the enemy is weak and bound to fail, as well as reminding them of what Allah has prepared of reward for those who fight, and the punishment incurred by those

who lag behind. All of these matters and others are part of encouraging the believers to fight.

﴿It may be that Allah will curb the might of those who disbelieve﴾ that is, by means of your fighting them in Allah's cause and urging one another to do so.

﴿for Allah is strongest in might﴾ that is, in power and strength and severest in punishment of the sinner; He punishes the sinner himself so that he will be a lesson for others. If He had so willed, He could have defeated the disbelievers by his might and power, and not left a trace of them. But by His wisdom He tests some of His slaves by means of others, so that the principle of jihad will be established and beneficial faith will flourish thereby, that faith which is based on choice, not that which is based on coercion and force, which is of no benefit at all.



﴿مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفْعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفْعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٥)

- 4:85. Whoever mediates in a good cause will have a share in the reward thereof, but whoever mediates in a bad cause will have a share in the burden of sin thereof. And Allah has control over all things.

What is meant by mediation here is helping in some matter. Whoever joins another person and they both strive in some good cause – which includes mediating for the oppressed with the one who is oppressing them – will have a share in the reward thereof, according to his efforts, striving and results, without that detracting anything from the reward of the one who initiated the matter or took it upon himself. But whoever helps someone else in doing evil will have a

burden of sin commensurate with what he did and helped with. This offers a great deal of encouragement to cooperate in righteousness and piety, and it is a stern warning against cooperating in sin and transgression. This is affirmed by the words of Allah: ﴿And Allah has control over all things﴾ that is, He is a witness Who is always watching, taking careful account of these deeds and He will requite each person as he deserves.



﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِنَحِيَةٍ فَحِوْا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ٨٦)

- 4:86. When you are given a greeting, respond with a better greeting, or [at least] with the like thereof. Verily, Allah takes careful account of all things.

The greeting is that which is spoken by one of the two who meet one another, by way of honouring and praying for the other, along with what accompanies that of smiles and so on.

The best and most sublime of greetings is that which is taught by Islam of initiating and returning the greeting of *salâm*. Allah (ﷻ) instructs the believers that when they are greeted in any manner, they should give a response that is better than it in terms of wording, smiles and so on. What we may understand from this is that it is not allowed to refrain from returning the greeting altogether or to return it with something less than it.

From this verse we learn that initiating the greeting of *salâm* is encouraged on the basis of two things:

- 1- Allah instructs us to respond to the greeting with something better than it or (at least) equal to it. This implies that initiating the greeting is required according to Islamic teaching.

- 2- The fact that it refers to something better indicates that participating in giving then returning the greeting is a good thing.

However there is an exception to the general meaning of the verse, which is when someone greets another in a situation where it is not enjoined to return the greeting, such as if that person is busy reading Qur'an, listening to a *khutbah*, praying, and the like; in that case he is not required to respond to the greeting. A similar exception is made in the case of one whom the Lawgiver has instructed us to shun and not greet, namely the repentant sinner who may be deterred by shunning. He is to be shunned and not greeted, and his greeting is not to be returned, because doing so would undermine the general interest that may be achieved by shunning him.

Returning the greeting includes every greeting that is customary among the people and is not forbidden according to Islamic teachings; we are enjoined to return such greetings with a greeting that is equal to or better than it.

Then Allah (ﷻ) issues promises and warnings connected to doing good deeds or bad deeds respectively, as He says: ﴿Verily, Allah takes careful account of all things﴾, so He records all people's deeds, both good and bad, small and great, then He will requite them as dictated by His grace, justice and rulings.



﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٧)

- 4:87. Allah: there is no god but He. He will surely gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection, of which there is no doubt. Who is truer in word than Allah?

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He is One and that there is no god or object of worship except Him, because He is perfect in His essence and attributes, and because the power of creation and control is exclusively His, and all blessings, both apparent and hidden, come from Him alone.

This requires that one should worship Him and to draw near to Him by means of all kinds of servitude to Him, because He alone is deserving of that and He is the One Who will requite His slaves for what they do or do not do of submitting themselves to Him. Hence He swore that this requital will indeed come to pass, and on the Day of Resurrection, as He says: ﴿He will surely gather you all together﴾ that is, the first of you and the last of you, in one place.

﴿on the Day of Resurrection, of which there is no doubt﴾ that is, there is no doubt concerning it whatsoever, on the basis of both rational and textual evidence. Rational evidence is found in what we witness of the revival of the earth after it was dead, and from the initial creation of the universe, and its recreation will be easier. In terms of wisdom, Allah definitely did not create anything in vain, for no reason, merely to live and then die. As for textual evidence, it is the fact that the Most Truthful One tells us of that, and indeed swears to it. Hence He says: ﴿Who is truer in word than Allah?﴾

Similarly, He instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to swear to that in more than one place in the Qur'an, as in the verse in which He says: ﴿Those who disbelieve claim that that they will never be resurrected. Say: Yes indeed, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will surely be informed of all that you have done. And that is easy for Allah.﴾ (at-Taghâbun 64: 7)

﴿Who is truer in word than Allah?﴾ – Here Allah tells us that His word is of the highest level of truth. Anything that is said concerning belief, knowledge and deeds that is contrary to what Allah has told

us is false, because it goes against the true and certain text, hence it cannot be true.



﴿ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَرَكْسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا ۖ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴾ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً ۖ فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴾ ﴿٨٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقْتُلُوكُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ أَعْتَرَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقْتِلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴾ ﴿٩٠﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ ءَاخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلًّا مَا رَدُّوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا ۚ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَرِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تُقْبِلُوهُمْ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴾ ﴿٩١﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٨-٩١)

- 4:88. What is the matter with you, that you are divided into two parties regarding the hypocrites, when Allah has cast them back [to disbelief] on account of their misdeeds? Do you seek to guide those whom Allah has caused to go astray? For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them].
- 4:89. They wish that you would disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you will be all alike. Therefore do not take any of them as allies [or friends] until they migrate for the sake of Allah. But if they turn away [from Islam], seize them and slay them wherever you find them; and take neither protectors nor helpers from among them.

- 4:90. Except those who join a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], or come to you with their hearts feeling discomfort at the prospect of fighting either you or their own people. If Allah had willed, He could have given them resolve and they would have fought you. Therefore if they let you be and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah has not granted you any reason [to fight] against them.
- 4:91. Others you will find who want to be safe from you and safe from their own people, but whenever they are faced anew with temptation to evil, plunge into it headlong. Therefore if they do not let you be and do not offer you peace, and do not restrain their hands [from fighting you], then seize them and slay them wherever you encounter them, for Allah has given you a clear reason [to fight] against them.

What is meant by the hypocrites mentioned in these verses is the hypocrites who appeared outwardly to be Muslims but did not migrate, in addition to being disbelievers. Some confusion about their situation had arisen among the Companions (رضي الله عنهم): some of them felt uneasy about fighting them and severing ties with them because of what they showed of apparent faith, whilst others were aware of their true nature on the basis of their deeds, thus they deemed them disbelievers.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) told them that they should not be confused about them or have any doubt; rather their situation was quite clear and there was nothing confusing about it. They were hypocrites who had repeatedly shown their disbelief and – in addition to their disbelief – they wish that you would disbelieve and become like them. Once you understand that this is how they are, ﴿Therefore do not take any of them as allies [or friends]﴾. This requires that you should not love them, because alliances and friendships can only stem from love.

It also requires that you should hate them and regard them as enemies, because the prohibition on anything is a command to do the opposite. This command was something temporary, until they

migrated; if they migrated, they were to be treated like all other Muslims, as the Prophet (ﷺ) applied the rulings of Islam to everyone who had been with him and migrated with him, whether they were truly believers or only making an outward show of faith.

But if they did not migrate and they refused to do so, ﴿seize them and slay them wherever you find them﴾ that is, at any time, in any place. This is part of the evidence which indicates that the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months had been abrogated, as is the view of the majority of scholars. Those who disagree say that these are general texts and are to be interpreted as being subject to the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months.

Then Allah made an exception from fighting the hypocrites, in the case of three groups, two of whom he was instructed to leave alone, and that instruction was confirmed.

The first group was those who joined a people with whom the Muslims had a treaty according to which they would not fight them. Those who joined that group would come under the same ruling as them and thus their lives and property would be protected.

The second group was people whose ﴿hearts [felt] discomfort at the prospect of fighting either you or their own people﴾ that is, they remain as they were and cannot let themselves fight you or fight their own people; they want to refrain from fighting both groups. Allah commanded (the Muslims) not to fight these people either, and He explained the wisdom behind that: ﴿If Allah had willed, He could have given them resolve and they would have fought you﴾. So there were three possibilities: either they would be with you and fight your enemies, which was not possible in the case of these people, so there remained only the possibility of fighting you alongside their own people or not fighting either side, which is the lesser of two evils as far as you are concerned, for Allah could have given them that resolve to fight against you. So you should accept this blessing and praise your Lord Who restrained them from fighting you when they could

have done so. Therefore if these people ﴿let you be and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah has not granted you any reason [to fight] against them﴾.

The third group is people who care only for their own interests and they have no respect for you. These are the ones of whom Allah says: ﴿Others﴾ among these hypocrites ﴿you will find who want to be safe from you﴾ because they are afraid of you ﴿and safe from their own people, but whenever they are faced anew with temptation to evil, plunge into it headlong﴾ that is, they are still persisting in their disbelief and hypocrisy.

So whenever anything happens to them of turmoil and trouble, it blinds them and causes them to rush headlong into trouble, increasing their disbelief and hypocrisy. These people appear outwardly to be like the second group, but in fact they are different from them, because the second group refrains from fighting the believers out of respect towards them, not out of fear for themselves. But this group refrains from fighting them out of fear, not out of respect; rather if they had the opportunity to fight the believers, they would be ready to make the most of it. If they do not show any sign of wanting to refrain from fighting, then they should be fought. Hence Allah says: ﴿Therefore if they do not let you be and do not offer you peace, and do not restrain their hands [from fighting you], then seize them and slay them wherever you encounter them, for Allah has given you a clear reason [to fight] against them﴾ that is: He has given you clear proof that they are transgressing against you and are not seeking peace, so they have no one to blame but themselves.



﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانِ مِنْ

قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ
 بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
 مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٢)

- 4:92. Never should a believer kill a believer, unless it be by mistake. Whoever kills a believer by mistake must free a believing slave and pay blood money to the deceased's family, unless they forgo it as an act of charity. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, then the freeing of a believing slave [is enough]. If he belonged to a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], then the blood money should be paid to his family and a believing slave be freed. Anyone who lacks the means to do this must fast for two consecutive months by way of repentance to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

The wording of the original Arabic indicates that this should never happen; that is, it could not happen and it is not possible that a believer could kill another believer deliberately. This tells us that this prohibition is very serious and that this action is diametrically opposed to faith. Indeed, such a thing can only be done by a disbeliever or an evil doer whose faith is sorely lacking and for whom there is the fear of something even worse than that (namely losing his faith altogether).

True faith prevents the believer from killing his brother with whom Allah has ordained the brotherhood of faith, which involves loving him, taking him as a close friend and ally, and protecting his brother from any harm; what harm could be greater than killing? This is confirmed by the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):

«Do not go back to being disbelievers after I am gone, striking one another's necks.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Thus it is known that killing is an act of disbelief and is the gravest of major sins after ascribing partners to Allah.

Because the words «Never should a believer kill a believer» are general in meaning and include all situations, and because killing should not be committed by a believer against his brother under any circumstances, Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception in the case of killing by mistake:

«unless it be by mistake» – the one who made a mistake and did not intend to kill is not a sinner and has not transgressed the limits set by Allah. But because he has done a terrible deed which is enough to make the act abhorrent even though he did not intend to do it, Allah (ﷻ) has ordained that he must offer expiation and pay the diyah (blood money), as He says:

«Whoever kills a believer by mistake», whether the killer was male or female, free or slave, young or old, of sound mind or insane, Muslim or disbeliever – this may be understood from the word 'man' (translated here as «Whoever»), which is general in meaning. And that applies whether the person killed was male or female, young or old, as may be understood. The killer must «free a believing slave» as expiation for his act, from his own wealth. The slave may be young or old, male or female, healthy or otherwise, according to the view of some of the scholars.

However wisdom dictates that it should not be valid to free a slave who has a physical defect as expiation, because the purpose behind freeing the slave is to benefit the freed slave and put him in control of his own affairs. If he will lose out by being manumitted, and remaining a slave is more beneficial for him, then it is not valid to free him as expiation. Moreover the words «free a slave» may imply that he should be physically sound, because freeing him is for his own benefit, as he will no longer be working for the benefit of someone else. But if he is unable to do beneficial work because of

his physical problems, then there is no point in freeing him. Think about it and it will become clear.

With regard to the *diyah* (blood money), it must be paid by the '*âqilah* (male relatives on the father's side) of the killer in cases of accidental killing and quasi-intentional killing.

«to the deceased's family» as consolation to them. What is meant by his family here is his heirs, because the heirs inherit what the deceased has left behind, and the blood money is included in what he has left behind. There are many details concerning the blood money, which are discussed in the books of *fiqh*.

«unless they forgo it as an act of charity» that is, unless the heirs of the deceased give charity by letting the killer off, in which case the blood money is waived. This is encouragement to them to pardon the killer, because Allah describes that as charity, and charity is required at all times.

«If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you» that is, disbelievers who are in a state of war against you

«and he was a believer, then the freeing of a believing slave [is enough]» and you do not have to pay blood money to his family, and there is no consideration of their lives and property (because they are at war with the Muslims).

«If he» that is, the victim «belonged to a people between whom and you there is a treaty [of peace], then the blood money should be paid to his family and a believing slave be freed». That is out of consideration for his family, because they come under the treaty.

«Anyone who lacks the means to do this» that is, he does not own a slave or have sufficient funds to purchase one, because he is going through financial hardship and does not have any wealth surplus to his maintenance and basic needs from which to ransom a slave

«must fast for two consecutive months» that is, he cannot break the fast during this period without an excuse; if he breaks the fast because

he does have an excuse, then that does not affect the continuity of his fasting, as in the case of sickness, menses and the like. But if he breaks the fast without an excuse, that does interrupt the continuity of his fasting, and he must start fasting all over again.

﴿by way of repentance to Allah﴾ that is, as expiation that Allah has enjoined upon the killer as a way of seeking forgiveness that He has ordained for His slaves, out of mercy towards them, and as a means of expiating for what may have happened of shortcomings and carelessness on their parts, as often happens in the case of accidental killing.

﴿Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His knowledge is complete and His wisdom is perfect; nothing the size of a speck of dust, or anything smaller or greater than that, is hidden from Him on earth or in heaven, at any time or in any place. Everything is subject to His wisdom in terms of what He has created and the laws that He has ordained. In fact everything that He has created or prescribed is based on utmost wisdom. By His knowledge and wisdom He has enjoined that the killer must offer expiation that is appropriate to his action; because he was the cause of the loss of a life that was protected according to Allah's laws, it is appropriate that he should free a slave and liberate him from the bond of servitude to people, so that he may enjoy complete freedom. If he cannot afford to free a slave, then he must fast for two consecutive months, thus freeing himself from enslavement to physical desires and pleasures that prevent a person from attaining eternal bliss, so that he can worship Allah (ﷻ) by giving up those desires and drawing closer to Allah.

Allah has made this fasting period so lengthy and difficult, and has required that it be done consecutively, and He has not prescribed feeding the poor in this case, because the latter is not appropriate here. This is in contrast to the expiation for *dhihār* (a *jāhili* form of divorce in which a man said to his wife, "You are to me as my mother's back"), which will be discussed in due course, in *shā' Allāh*.

By His wisdom, Allah enjoined blood money for any killing, even if it is by mistake, to serve as a deterrent and prevent similar cases of killing, by using appropriate means to prevent it.

By His wisdom, He enjoined the 'âqilah to pay the blood money in the case of accidental killing, according to scholarly consensus, because the killer was not at fault and it is difficult for him to bear the cost of this expensive blood money. Therefore it is appropriate that this should be done by those with whom he has ties of mutual help and support, in order to achieve the public interest and ward off harm from people. (Perhaps this is a motive that would prompt the 'âqilah to prevent the one whom they have to help with payment of blood money from killing, for fear that they will be burdened with this payment). It also serves to reduce the burden because it is shared by all of them, each according to his means. The payment is also made easier in that it may be spread over three years.

By His wisdom and knowledge, He decreed that the family of the victim should be compensated for their calamity by means of the blood money, which is enjoined upon the family of the killer.



﴿وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَعَظِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٣)

- 4:93. But whoever kills a believer deliberately, his punishment will be hell, to abide therein forever; Allah will be angry with him, and will curse him, and will prepare for him a grievous punishment.

Before this, Allah stated that no deliberate killing of the believer can be done by another believer, and that such killing is an act of disbelief. Here He mentions the warning to the one who kills

deliberately; it is a warning that makes the heart tremble and causes great distress to people who understand.

There is no greater warning with regard to other major sins, or even anything like it. It is a warning that the recompense for the deed is hell; in other words, this major sin on its own dictates that the one who commits it should be requited in hell, with all its severe punishments, utter humiliation, divine wrath, missing out on triumph and success, and ending up with loss and doom. May Allah protect us from everything that takes us away from His mercy.

The leading scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) differed concerning the interpretation of this verse, although they were all agreed on the falseness of the Kharijite and Mutazilite view, according to which those who commit this act will abide in hell for eternity, even if they affirm the oneness of Allah. The correct interpretation is that given by the great scholar Shams ad-Deen ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) in *al-Madârij*. After mentioning the other interpretations and critically examining them, he said:

One group said: This and similar texts, which mention a punishment that fits the crime, do not necessarily mean that the punishment will automatically be carried out if the crime is committed, because for any ruling to be implemented there are conditions that must be met and impediments that must be absent. All that these texts tell us is that such a punishment fits a certain crime or sin.

Furthermore, there is proof of impediments, some of which are based on scholarly consensus and others on texts. Repentance is an impediment [to punishment] according to scholarly consensus, as is affirmation of the oneness of Allah, on the basis of mutawâtir texts that no one can ignore. Other impediments include great deeds that erase sin, major calamities that expiate sin, and carrying out of the hudood punishments in this world, according to the texts. There is no way that we can ignore these texts and proofs; therefore we have no choice but to accept all the texts together from both

angles. That is why both good and bad deeds are compared, so as to work out whether a person deserves to be punished or not, so that his destiny is based on whichever outweighs the other.

They said: Weighing up what is good or bad in this world and in the hereafter is the basis of shar'î rulings and the decrees of Allah. This is the basis on which the entire creation is ruled and on which the connection between cause and effect is established, both in the natural laws governing the universe and the laws of Sharia.

Allah has created for everything its opposite, which resists it and wards it off, and the stronger will ultimately prevail.

Strength is based on sound health and physical well-being, and an imbalance of the humours resists the natural function of the body that would lead to strength, and whichever is stronger will prevail. Similarly in the conflict between medicine and sickness, there are things in the body that are inclined to be healthy and other things that are inclined to be sick; the one tries to prevent the other from having a full effect and tries to resist it. If one prevails over the other, its effect will have the greatest impact.

Hence we know that people are of different categories. Some will enter paradise and not enter hell, and vice versa. Some will enter hell but will come out of it, and the length of his stay therein will be commensurate with the cause of his entering it, which will determine whether he will exit it quickly or after some time. Whoever has deep insight will see everything of which Allah has informed us in His Book, of the hereafter and its details; he will envisage it clearly as if he can see it.

This is certainty of faith which will burn up bad deeds as fire burns up wood. For one who has that level of certainty, it is impossible to persist in evil deeds, and if he does such a thing and does a lot of it, what he has of light of faith will force him to renew his repentance

every time, by turning back to Allah in constant repentance. Such a person is one of the dearest of creation to Allah.

May Allah reward him (Ibn al-Qayyim) with good on behalf of Islam and Muslims.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَن أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٤)

- 4:94. O you who believe, when you go forth [to fight] in the cause of Allah, use your discernment, and do not say to one who offers you the greeting of peace: You are not a believer, out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life. For with Allah are abundant gains. You yourselves were in the same position before, then Allah bestowed His grace upon you. Therefore use your discernment, for Allah is well aware of all that you do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves, when they go out to engage in jihad in His cause and seeking His pleasure, to use their discernment and examine all ambiguous matters, for matters are of two types: those that are clear and those that are unclear.

As for those that are clear, there is no need for further clarification, because there is no need to prove what is clear.

As for those that are ambiguous or unclear, one needs to examine them and clarify them in order to find out whether to go ahead with them or not. This examination in order to reach certainty leads to many benefits and prevents many evils, through which the extent of an individual's religious commitment, wisdom and maturity may

be determined, in contrast to the one who rushes into things without taking time to think about them and before the issue and its connected rulings become clear to him; that leads to undesirable consequences, as happened to those whom Allah rebuked in this verse, because they did not examine and verify the situation, and they killed the one who greeted them with salâms, who had with him booty that belonged to him or the property of someone else, because they thought that this would be acceptable. But that was a mistake, hence Allah rebuked them in this verse: ﴿and do not say to one who offers you the greeting of peace: You are not a believer, out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life. For with Allah are abundant gains﴾. In other words: do not let small fleeting gains lead you to commit inappropriate actions and thus miss out on what there is with Allah of immense and lasting reward, for that which is with Allah is better and more lasting.

This indicates that the individual should, if he finds himself inclined to something that is in harmony with his whims and desires – and it is harmful – remind himself of what Allah has promised to the one who restrains himself and avoids following whims and desires, and who gives precedence to pleasing Allah over pleasing himself. This will motivate him to follow the command of Allah, even if that is difficult for him.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says, reminding them of their previous situation, before they were guided to Islam: ﴿You yourselves were in the same position before, then Allah bestowed His grace upon you﴾ that is, just as He guided you after you had been astray, He may also guide others; just as guidance was a gradual process for you, it may also be like that for others.

So the one who is perfect should look at how he was before he was perfect, and think about how he should deal with those who are still like that, on the basis of what he knows about how he was before, and he should call them with wisdom and beautiful preaching. This is one of the most effective ways in which he may benefit himself and

others, hence the command to examine and verify is repeated once more: «Therefore use your discernment».

If he is one of those who have gone out to fight in jihad in Allah's cause and to fight the enemies of Allah, and he has made all sorts of preparations to harm them, then he is instructed to verify and examine the one who greets him with salâms. If there is a strong indication that that person only did that in order to protect himself from being killed, or out of fear for his life, then this indicates that the instruction to verify and check is something that is applicable in all situations where there could be some ambiguity. So things should be verified and examined until the matter becomes clear.

«for Allah is well aware of all that you do» and He will requite each one for his deeds and intentions, in accordance with what He knows of His slaves' circumstances and intentions.



﴿لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۖ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٥-٩٦)

- 4:95. Not equal are those believers who stay at home, apart from those forced by necessity, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah, offering their wealth and their lives. Allah has given a rank higher to those who strive and fight, offering their wealth and their lives, than to those who stay at home. To each Allah has promised the ultimate good, but Allah favours those who strive and fight, over those who stay at home, with an immense reward,

4:96. ranks specially bestowed by Him, and forgiveness and mercy.
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

That is, the believer who engages in jihad, offering his life and his wealth, and the one who does not go out for jihad and does not fight the enemies of Allah, are not equal. This is encouragement to go out for jihad and a warning against being lazy and staying behind with no excuse.

With regard to people who have physical issues, such as the sick, the blind, the lame, and those who do not have the means to equip themselves, they are not like those who stay at home with no excuse. Whoever has a physical problem and is content to stay at home, and has no intention of going out for the sake of Allah, even if he did not have that problem that prevented him from doing so, and did not think about it, is of the same status as one who stayed behind with no excuse.

Whoever would definitely have gone out in the cause of Allah were it not for this impediment, wishes that he could do that and thinks about this matter to himself, is of the same status as one who went out for jihad, because the definite intention, if it is accompanied by doing as much as one can in word or deed, means that one has attained the same status as the one who actually does it.

Then Allah (ﷻ) states that the mujâhideen are of a higher rank or status. This is a differentiation in general terms, then He states that in more detail and promises them forgiveness from their Lord, and mercy that encompasses all that is good and wards off all that is evil. These ranks were explained by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadith narrated from him in *aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥayn* (the two authentic Hadith collections of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim), in which he told us that in paradise there are one hundred levels, and the distance between each two levels is like the distance between heaven and earth; Allah has prepared it for those who engage in jihad for His sake.

Allah has connected this reward to jihad; this is like the verse in Soorat as-Şaff in which He says:

﴿O you who believe, shall I tell you about a deal that will save you from a painful punishment? Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive and fight, offering your wealth and your lives in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if only you knew. [If you do that] He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens through which rivers flow and fine dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; that is the supreme triumph.﴾ (as-Şaff 61: 10-12)

Think about the way in which the idea of superiority is expressed in these verses, as it states first of all that the mujâhid and others are not equal, then it states clearly that the mujâhid is superior by one rank to the one who stays behind, then it moves on to the idea of his being favoured with forgiveness, mercy and high status.

This gradual approach from one rank to another in the context of praise, or going from one status to one that is lower than it in the context of condemnation, is more eloquent and has a greater impact.

This is how it is when one category of people is favoured over another, and each of them has its own virtues; Allah mentions the good characteristics that they have in common lest anyone think that the one of lesser standing is being condemned. For this reason Allah says here: ﴿To each Allah has promised the ultimate good﴾.

Similarly, Allah says in the passage from Soorat as-Şaff referred to above:

﴿...And give these glad tidings to the believers.﴾ (as-Şaff 61: 13)

And Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿...Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquest of Makkah [and those who did not]...﴾ (al-Hadeed 57: 10)

Then He says: ﴿To each Allah has promised the ultimate good﴾, as He says elsewhere:

﴿We guided Sulaymān to the right verdict, and to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge...﴾ (al-Anbiyā' 21: 79)

The one who wants to highlight the contrast between individuals and groups and deeds may pay attention to this point.

Similarly, if he wants to speak in the context of criticising people or opinions, he may mention what they have in common when contrasting them to one another, lest anyone think that the preferred one is perfect. For example, if it is said that the Christian is better than the Magian (Zoroastrian), let him add: although both are disbelievers.

Because the promise to the mujāhideen of forgiveness and mercy is derived from two of His noble names, ﴿Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾, this verse ends with them, as He says: ﴿For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَظْفِعِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ۝٩٧ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَظْفِعِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ۝٩٨ فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٩٧-٩٩)

(٩٩-٩٧)

- 4:97. Verily, when the angels take [in death] the souls of those who have wronged themselves, they ask them: What was the matter with you? They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land. They say: Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place? For those, their ultimate abode is hell, an evil journey's end.

- 4:98. Except those who are [really] weak and oppressed – men, women, and children – who have no means in their power and do not know where to go.
- 4:99. For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive them, for Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.

This is a stern warning to those who did not migrate when they were able to, until they died. The angels who seize their souls rebuke them with these harsh words and say: ﴿What was the matter with you?﴾ In other words: what was your situation? How did you make yourself distinct from the polytheists? In fact you increased their numbers and perhaps you supported them against the believers, and you missed out on a lot of righteous deeds, jihad with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and being with the Muslims, helping them against their enemies.

﴿They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land﴾ that is, weak, downtrodden and oppressed; we had no means of migrating. But they are not speaking the truth when they say that, because Allah rebuked them and warned them, and Allah does not burden any soul with more than it can bear.

Then an exception is made for those who were genuinely weak and oppressed; hence the angels say to them: ﴿Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place?﴾ This is a question that is asked to establish a fact. In other words it is well established in the minds of everyone that the land of Allah is spacious and whenever a person is in a place where he is not able to practise his religion openly, then he has other places on earth and a way out to a land where he will be able to worship Allah, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O My slaves who believe, verily My earth is spacious, so worship Me alone.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 56)

Allah (ﷻ) says of these people who have no excuse: ﴿For those, their ultimate abode is hell, an evil journey's end﴾. This, as stated above, mentions the reasons that led to that; on the Day of Judgement this is what will happen, if all conditions are fulfilled and there are no impediments; but there may be impediments that could prevent that fate.

This verse indicates that migration is one of the greatest obligations, and failing to do it is forbidden; in fact it is one of the gravest major sins. This verse indicates that everyone who dies has taken in full all that was decreed for him of provision, lifespan and deeds. This understanding is based on the phrase translated here as ﴿take [in death]﴾, which comes from a root that has the meaning of taking in full, because if there was anything left for him to take, his soul would not be taken in death.

This verse highlights belief in the angels and praises them, because Allah mentions them by way of confirming His approval of them.

Then an exception is made for those who are truly weak and oppressed, who have no means of migrating at all, ﴿and do not know where to go﴾.

Allah says concerning these people: ﴿For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive them, for Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving﴾. The word '*asa*' (translated here as ﴿there is hope that﴾), when used in reference to Allah, indicates that it will inevitably happen, because of His generosity and kindness. When the Qur'an says that there is hope of reward for the one who does some deeds, this means that the reward will not be due unless the deed is done in the proper manner. If it is not done in the proper manner, then the individual has fallen short and does not deserve that reward. And Allah knows best.

This verse indicates that the one who is unable to do what he is instructed of an obligatory duty or otherwise is excused, as Allah (ﷻ) says concerning those who are unable to engage in jihad:

«There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick [if they do not go forth to fight]...» (al-Fath 48: 17)

And Allah says of the commands in general:

«So fear Allah as best you can...» (at-Taghâbun 64: 16)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If I instruct you to do something, then do as much of it as you can.»
(Muslim)

But there is no excuse for a person unless he tries his best then is not able to do it, because Allah (ﷻ) says: «who have no means in their power». This verse indicates that having a guide in Hajj and 'umrah, and similar matters where travel is required, is one of the conditions of being able to do it.



﴿وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِقًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾
(سورة النساء: ١٠٠)

- 4:100. He who migrates for the sake of Allah will find in the earth many places of refuge and abundant provision. Whoever leaves his home migrating for the cause of Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is then incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This is encouraging people to migrate, and explaining the interests that will be served by it. Allah promises – and His promise is true – that whoever migrates for His sake, seeking His pleasure, will find many places of refuge on earth, and abundant provision. The many places of refuge refers to that which will help to serve the interests of one's religious commitment, and abundant provision refers to some

worldly interests. That is because many people think that if they migrate, they will be unsettled after having been settled, they will be poor after having been rich, they will be humiliated after having been proud, and they will go through hardship after having had a life of ease.

But that is not the case. So long as the believer remains among the polytheists, he will fall far short with regard to his religious duties, both in acts of worship that he may do alone, such as prayer and the like, as well as other acts of worship which must be done by joining others, such as jihad in word and deed, and matters that are connected to that, because he is not able to do that. He will always be under threat and will drift away from his religion (because of persecution and fear), especially if he is weak and oppressed.

But if he migrates for the sake of Allah, he will be able to establish the religion of Allah, and engage in jihad against the enemies of Allah and oppose them in word and deed. Moreover, he will have an opportunity to increase his provision. And indeed it came to pass as Allah (ﷻ) foretold.

The best example of that is the *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم), when they migrated for the sake of Allah, leaving their homes, children and property for His sake. Their faith was completed thereby and they attained perfect faith; they were able to engage in jihad and support the religion of Allah in such a way that they became an example to follow for those who came after them. They also attained that which usually results from that of great victories and a great deal of booty, as a result of which they became the richest of people. Similarly, anyone who does what they did will attain the same results as they did, and this will remain so until the Day of Resurrection.

Then Allah says: ﴿Whoever leaves his home migrating for the cause of Allah and His Messenger﴾ that is, migrating for the sake of his Lord and His pleasure, out of love for His Messenger (ﷺ) and in support of the religion of Allah, not for any other purpose

﴿and death overtakes him﴾ by being killed or otherwise
 ﴿his reward is then incumbent upon Allah﴾ that is, he will attain the reward of the *muḥājir* (migrant) who achieved his goal of migration by being guaranteed (a complete reward) by Allah. That is because he intended and decided, and he took the first step and started to take action. By Allah's mercy towards him and others like him, He will give them the reward in full, even if they did not complete the action, and He will forgive them for whatever shortcomings occurred in terms of migration and otherwise.

Hence this verse ends with these two noble names of Allah, as He says: ﴿And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He forgives the believers what they commit of errors, especially those who repent and turn back to their Lord.

﴿Most Merciful﴾ to all of His creation; by His mercy he brought them into existence, granted them physical well-being, and bestowed upon them wealth, children, power and so on. And He is Most Merciful to the believers, as He guided them to faith and taught them knowledge by means of which they may attain certainty; He made easy for them the means of attaining happiness and success, and that by means of which they will attain the highest reward and will see, by His mercy and grace, that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has not entered the mind of man. We ask Allah not to deprive us of His bounty because of our evil deeds.



﴿وَإِذَا صَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا ۝١١﴾ وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا

حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۚ وَذَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُوا عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۚ وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠١-١٠٢)

- 4:101. When you are travelling in the land, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers, if you fear the disbelievers may harm you, for the disbelievers are unto you avowed enemies.
- 4:102. When you [O Messenger] are with the believers and lead them in prayer, let one group of them stand [in prayer] with you, taking their weapons with them. When they have finished their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear. Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed, come and pray with you, taking all precautions, and also taking their weapons with them. Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage, then they would swoop down on you all at once. But there is no blame on you if you put away your weapons because of the inconvenience of rain or because you are ill; but take all precautions for yourselves. Verily Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.

These two verses are the basis for the concession allowing shortening of the prayers (when travelling) and the fear prayer. Allah (ﷻ) says ﴿When you are travelling in the land﴾. The apparent meaning of the verse indicates that the concession is applicable to any type of travel, even if it is for sinful purposes, as is the view of Abu Ḥaneefah (may Allah have mercy on him). However the majority of scholars, including the other three imams and others, do not allow the concession if the travel is for sinful purposes. The concession is a kind of mercy granted by Allah to make things easier for His slaves, so when they travel they may shorten their prayers and break the

fast. But when the sinner travels, the purpose of his journey makes it inappropriate for any concession to be granted to him.

«there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers» that is, there is nothing wrong with it and there is no sin on you. This does not contradict the fact that shortening the prayers is preferable (when travelling), because stating that there is no blame or sin is aimed at removing any doubt that may arise. Moreover it does not contradict the fact that it (shortening the prayer when travelling) may be obligatory. This is similar to the verse in Soorat al-Baqarah, in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily Şafā and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever comes to the House for Hajj or 'umrah, there is no blame on him for going back and forth between them. And whoever does good of his own accord, then verily Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing.»
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 158)¹⁴

The reason for removing doubt in this case is obvious; it is because it is well established in the Muslims' minds that prayer is obligatory and is to be offered in the complete form, and nothing could remove any doubt about the permissibility of shortening the prayer except a clear statement that there is no sin or blame on the one who does that.

The fact that it is preferable to shorten the prayers rather than offer them in full (when travelling) is indicated by the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) shortened his prayers on all his journeys and this comes under the heading of flexibility, concession and mercy towards people. Allah (ﷻ) loves people to avail themselves of His concessions just as He hates them to disobey Him.

«if you shorten your prayers» – a literal translation would be “shorten from the prayers”. The use of the preposition *min* (from) indicates two things:

¹⁴ In this verse, the statement that there is no blame on the one who goes back and forth between Şafā and Marwah (*sa'iy*) does not contradict the fact that doing so is obligatory in Hajj and 'umrah.

- 1- If the preposition was not present, then there would not be any guideline on how much to shorten the prayer by, as a result of which some people may think that most of the prayer may be omitted and that making it only one *rak'ah* would be sufficient. Therefore the phrase used is *min aṣ-ṣalāh* (literally, from the prayer), to indicate that this shortening should be in accordance with specific guidelines, as established by the teachings and practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions.
- 2- The word *min* (from) implies some, not all. Thus it is known that shortening refers to some of the obligatory prayers, not all of them, because *fajr* and *maghrib* are not shortened; rather what are shortened are the four-*raka'āt* prayers, which are shortened from four to two *raka'āt*.

Once it is established that shortening of the prayers when travelling is a concession, we should note that the commentators differed concerning this condition, namely: «if you fear the disbelievers may harm you». The apparent meaning suggests that shortening prayers is only permissible when those two factors are present: travel and fear. The difference of opinion boils down to whether what is meant by the words «if you shorten» is shortening the number (of *raka'āt*) only, or shortening the number and the way in which it is done. The ambiguity has to do with the former, that is, concerning the number only.

Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) was not sure about this matter until he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about it.

«He said: O Messenger of Allah, why are we still shortening the prayers now, after we have become safe, when Allah says: «if you fear the disbelievers may harm you»?»

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: It is a charity that Allah has bestowed upon you, so accept His charity.» (Muslim, Ibn Mājah, and an-Nasā'i)

Based on that, this condition (of fear) is mentioned because this was the usual case faced by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, as most of their journeys were for the purpose of jihad.

We also learn something else which is the wisdom behind the granting of this concession of shortening the prayers, and the interest served thereby. In this verse, Allah explains the reason behind it, namely what is expected of hardship which makes granting a concession appropriate, namely the combination of travel and fear. That does not necessarily mean that shortening of the prayers should not be done in the case of travel alone (without the element of fear), which is usually accompanied by hardship.

The second opinion with regard to what is meant by shortening the prayer has to do with the number and the way in which it is done. In that case, the condition is to be understood as follows: If there is both travel and fear, then it is permissible to reduce the number and shorten the way it is done. If there is travel only, it is permissible to reduce the number of raka'ât only. If there is fear only, it is permissible to shorten the way in which it is done.

Therefore Allah describes the fear prayer after that, as He says: ﴿When you [O Messenger] are with the believers and lead them in prayer﴾. That is: when you lead them in the prayer that you establish, and do it in the proper manner as required, then teach them what is appropriate for them to do in these circumstances.

Then He explains that by saying: ﴿let one group of them stand [in prayer] with you﴾ that is, and let another group stand facing the enemy, as is indicated by the following: ﴿When they have finished their prostrations﴾ that is, when those who are with you have completed their prayer. Prayer is referred to as prostration in order to highlight the virtue of prostration and the fact that it is one of the pillars or essential parts of the prayer; in fact it is the greatest of its essential parts.

﴿let them take their position in the rear. Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed﴾, this is the group that had stood facing the enemy

﴿come and pray with you﴾. This indicates that the imam should remain after the first group leaves, waiting for the other group to come. When they come, the imam should lead them in the remainder of his prayer, then he sits and waits for them to complete their prayer, then he should lead them in saying the salām. This is one of the ways in which the fear prayer may be done. Other ways of doing the fear prayer have been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) in ṣaḥeeḥ reports with many *isnād*, all of which are permissible.

This verse indicates that prayer in congregation is an individual obligation for two reasons:

- 1- Allah (ﷻ) enjoined it in these difficult circumstances, at a time of intense fear when the possibility of an enemy attack was very high. If it is enjoined in these difficult circumstances, then it is more appropriate that it should be made obligatory at times of peace and safety.
- 2- The fact that in the fear prayer, the worshippers omit a lot of the conditions and essentials of the prayer, and many actions that would ordinarily render the prayer invalid are overlooked, only serves to emphasise the obligatory nature of praying in congregation. If it were not obligatory, it would not be permissible to omit these essentials for the sake of praying in congregation.

This verse indicates that it is preferable to pray behind one imam, even if that means not doing properly things that could have been done properly if they were to pray behind several imams. That is for the sake of uniting the Muslims and creating harmony among them, and preventing division, because that is more effective in instilling fear in the hearts of the enemy. Allah (ﷻ) also instructed them to take their weapons with them and to be cautious when offering the fear prayer.

Even though this involves movements and distractions whilst praying, it serves a clear interest, which is combining the prayer and jihad, and taking precautions against the enemy who are extremely keen to cause harm to the Muslims and swoop down on them and their baggage all at once. Hence Allah says: ﴿Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage, then they would swoop down on you all at once﴾.

Then Allah accepts the excuses of those who have an excuse, such as sickness or rain, allowing them to put away their weapons, but they should still take precautions, as He says: ﴿But there is no blame on you if you put away your weapons because of the inconvenience of rain or because you are ill; but take all precautions for yourselves. Verily Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment﴾.

One of the humiliating punishments is that which Allah instructed His believing party and the monotheistic supporters of His religion to carry out, namely killing them and fighting them wherever they found them, capturing them, besieging them, lying in wait for them on every route, taking precautions against them at all times, and not letting down their guard lest the disbelievers achieve some of their goals concerning them. To Allah be much praise for having blessed the believers and supported them with His help, and for His teachings by which, if they had followed them properly, they would never have been defeated in any battle and the enemy would never have prevailed over them at any time.

﴿When they have finished their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear﴾ – This phrase indicates that this group should complete all of their prayer before going to the place where the guards are, and that the Messenger (ﷺ) remained where he was, waiting for the other group to come before saying the salâm, because first He said that the group should stand with him, which indicates that they should follow him in the prayer. Then after that the action is attributed to them, not to the Messenger (ﷺ), which supports what we say.

«Then let the other group, who have not yet prayed, come and pray with you» – This indicates that the first group have finished praying, and that the entire prayer of the second group is to be with the imam in a true sense in the first rak'ah, and virtually in the second rak'ah (that is, not actually following the imam). This requires the imam to wait for them until they have completed their prayer, then he is to say the salām with them. This is clear to one who ponders and reflects.



﴿إِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا

(سورة النساء: ١٠٣)

4:103. When you have finished the prayer, remember Allah, standing, sitting, or lying down on your sides. Then when you are safe again, establish prayer [in the regular prescribed manner]. Prayer is prescribed for the believers at specific times.

That is, when you have finished your prayer, whether it is the fear prayer or otherwise, then remember Allah in all situations and circumstances. But the fear prayer is singled out for mention for several reasons, including the following:

- Soundness of the heart, and its prosperity and joy is to be attained by turning to Allah (ﷻ) with love, filling the heart with remembrance of Him and praising Him. This goal may be achieved mainly through prayer, which is essentially a connection between the slave and his Lord.
- Prayer increases one's understanding and certainty of faith, which is the reason why Allah has enjoined it upon His slaves every day and night. It is well known that the fear prayer does not achieve these aims because of mental and physical distraction

and fear, so Allah instructs the believers to make up for that by remembering Him (*dhikr*) after the prayer.

- Fear leads to anxiety, which could lead to weakness of the heart, and if the heart is weakened the body will be weakened and unable to resist the enemy. Remembering Allah, and remembering Him a great deal, is one of the greatest means of strengthening the heart.
- Remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) – along with patience and steadfastness – means success and prevailing against the enemy, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, when you meet an [enemy] troop, stand firm and remember Allah much, so that you may triumph.﴾

(*al-Anfāl* 8: 45)

Allah instructed them to remember Him a great deal in this situation; and there are other rulings.

﴿Then when you are safe again, establish prayer [in the regular prescribed manner]﴾ that is, when you are safe from fear and your minds and bodies are at ease, then complete the prayer in the proper manner, outwardly and inwardly, doing all essential parts, fulfilling its conditions, focusing with proper humility (*khushoo'*), and other things that perfect it.

﴿Prayer is prescribed for the believers at specific times﴾ that is, it is enjoined at its proper time; this indicates that it is obligatory and that it has a certain time, and it is not valid unless it is offered at that time. These times are well known and well established among the Muslims, young and old, knowledgeable and ignorant; they learned that from their Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who said:

«Pray as you have seen me praying.» (Bukhari)

The words «prescribed for the believers» indicate that the prayer is a measure of faith; as a person's faith is, so will his prayer be, with regard to perfection and completion. This indicates that the disbelievers – even if they comply with the Muslim rulings, as in

the case of *ahl adh-dhimmah* – are not expected to follow the minor issues of religion such as prayer, because that is not addressed to them and they are not to be enjoined to do it. Rather if they do it, it is not valid, so long as they are still disbelievers, even though they will be punished in the hereafter for not doing it and for not adhering to all other rulings.



﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلُمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلُمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلُمُونَ ۖ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠٤)

4:104. Do not weaken in pursuit of the enemy. If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships; but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

That is, do not falter or lose heart in pursuit of the disbelievers, and in waging jihad against them and persisting in that, for if the heart grows weary, it will lead to physical weakness and that in turn will weaken the resolve to resist the enemy; rather that you should be strong and active in fighting them. Then Allah mentions two things that will strengthen the hearts of the believers:

- 1- What befalls you of hardship, exhaustion, injuries and so on, for it also befalls your enemies. So it is not appropriate, on the basis of human dignity and Islamic chivalry, to be weaker than them when you have equal portions of pain and suffering, because what usually happens is that no one would feel too weak except one whose pain and suffering persists and his enemy constantly overwhelms him, not the one who has the upper hand sometimes and is overwhelmed at other times.

- 2- You hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for, for you hope to attain His reward and be safe from His punishment. Moreover, the elite among the believers have other sublime aims and noble aspirations, namely supporting the religion of Allah, establishing His law (Sharia), expanding the reach of Islam, guiding the lost and suppressing the enemies of the faith.

These matters give extra strength to the sincere believer, increase his energy and make him more courageous, because when a person fights and is patient in attaining worldly glory, even if he attains it, he will not be like the one who strives to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter, and to attain the pleasure of Allah and paradise. Glory be to the One Who created people to be so far apart in aspirations, and differentiated between them on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. For this reason He says here: ﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾; He is perfect in His knowledge and wisdom.



﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ١٥﴾ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ١٦ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَفُونَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَافًا أَثِيمًا ١٧ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّنُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ١٨ هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤَآءُ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ١٩ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ٢٠ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ٢١ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا

مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ ۚ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٠٥-١١٣)

- 4:105. Verily We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book in truth, so that you may judge between people, in accordance with what Allah has taught you. So do not be an advocate for the deceitful.
- 4:106. But seek the forgiveness of Allah; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 4:107. Do not plead on behalf of those who betray their own souls, for Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful.
- 4:108. They seek to hide from people but they do not seek to hide from Allah, for He is with them [by His knowledge] when they make plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him. Verily Allah encompasses [with His knowledge] all that they do.
- 4:109. There you are, arguing on their behalf in the life of this world, but who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their defender?
- 4:110. Yet whoever does evil or wrongs his own soul but thereafter asks Allah for forgiveness will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 4:111. And whoever earns sin, earns it only against his own soul. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.
- 4:112. But whoever commits an offence or a sin, then blames it on an innocent person, will bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin.
- 4:113. Were it not for Allah's grace towards you [O Muhammad], and His mercy, a party of them would have tried to lead you astray. But they only lead themselves astray, and they cannot harm you in the least. For Allah has sent down to you the Book and

wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. And the grace of Allah toward you is great indeed.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He sent to His slave and Messenger (ﷺ) the Book in truth; that is, protected from the devils as it was sent down, lest they insert any falsehood into it. Indeed, it has been sent down in truth, containing truth; what it tells us is true and its commands and prohibitions are just.

﴿The word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice...﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 115)

And He tells us that He sent it down in order to judge between people.

Elsewhere He says:

﴿...and We have sent down to you the Reminder [the Qur'an], so that you may explain to the people what has been sent down to them...﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 44)

Therefore it may be that this verse (4: 105) is referring to judging between people concerning disputes and differences, whereas the verse in Soorat an-Nahl refers to explaining the entire religion, both fundamentals and minor issues, or it may be that both verses have the same meaning, and thus judging between people in this case includes judging between them in cases of physical harm (murder and injury), slander against their honour, financial matters and all other rights, as well as explaining beliefs and all other rulings.

﴿in accordance with what Allah has taught you﴾ that is, not on the basis of your whims and desires; rather on the basis of what Allah has taught you and inspired in you. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Nor does he speak of his own accord.﴾ (*an-Najm* 53: 3)

This indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) is infallible in what he conveys from Allah, rulings and otherwise. It also indicates that it is essential

that a judge be qualified in terms of knowledge and justice, because Allah says ﴿in accordance with what Allah has taught you﴾; He did not say “in accordance with your own opinion”.

Judging between people must also be based on knowledge of the Book. Just as Allah ordained that judging between people must be done on the basis of justice and fairness, He also forbade judging on the basis of injustice and inequity, which is the opposite of justice.

Therefore He said: ﴿So do not be an advocate for the deceitful﴾ that is, do not plead on behalf of one who you know to be deceitful, one who claims something that is not his or denies something that he owes, whether the judge is certain of that or he thinks it is likely to be the case.

This indicates that it is prohibited to dispute or speak on behalf of someone who is in the wrong when disputing religious matters or worldly rights and dues. The meaning of the verse indicates that it is permissible to get involved in disputes on behalf of a person who is not known to have done any wrong.

﴿But seek the forgiveness of Allah; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He forgives major sins for the one who seeks His forgiveness, repents to Him and turns to Him, and He will help him to do righteous deeds after that, which will earn His reward and ward off His punishment.

﴿Do not plead on behalf of those who betray their own souls﴾ in the sense of committing offences against their own souls. That includes the prohibition on speaking on behalf of one who has committed sin for which the punishment is now due, whether it is a *hadd* punishment (specified in Sharia) or a *ta'zeer* punishment (a disciplinary punishment meted out at the judge's discretion). So he should not plead on his behalf by trying to prove that he did not do it, or try to ward off the resulting punishment as dictated by Sharia.

﴿for Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful﴾ that is, one who is habitually treacherous and sinful. Stating that Allah does not love someone implies the opposite, which is that He hates such a person. This is like the reason why what is mentioned above should not be done.

Then Allah tells us about these treacherous people: ﴿They seek to hide from people but they do not seek to hide from Allah, for He is with them [by His knowledge] when they make plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him﴾. This is indicative of their lack of faith and certainty, as a result of which their fear of people is greater than their fear of Allah, for they are very keen to use all means, whether permissible or prohibited, to avoid exposure and scandal in front of people, whilst at the same time they show their audacity towards Allah by committing grievous sins, not caring that He is watching them.

He is with them by His knowledge in all situations, especially when they are making plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him, such as claiming that an offender is innocent, accusing an innocent person of an offence, and striving to convey that to the Messenger (ﷺ) so that he will do what they intend he should do.

Thus they combined a number of offences, and they did not remember that the Lord of heaven and earth, the One Who sees what is in their hearts, was watching them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) warns them by saying: ﴿Allah encompasses [with His knowledge] all that they do﴾ that is, He encompasses that with His knowledge, yet He did not hasten to punish them; rather He gave them respite, allowed them the opportunity to repent, and warned them that persisting in their sin would incur a severe punishment.

﴿There you are, arguing on their behalf in the life of this world, but who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their defender?﴾ That is, even if you try to defend them in the life of this world and if your argument wards off some of that which you were concerned about of shame and disgrace before

the people, how can that help and benefit them? Who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection, when proof is established against them and their own tongues, hands and feet testify against them concerning what they used to do?

﴿On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest [the true nature of all things].﴾ (an-Noor 24: 25)

Who could argue in their defence before the One Who knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden, the One Who will bring witnesses against them whose testimony cannot be refuted?

This verse points out the importance of highlighting the contrast between what one may imagine of attaining worldly interests by forsaking the commands of Allah or doing what He forbids, and what one would miss out on of reward in the hereafter or be subjected to of punishment. Hence the one whose nafs prompts him not to obey Allah should say to himself: There you are, failing to obey His command out of laziness and carelessness; what benefits have you attained thereby? What have you missed out on of the reward of the hereafter? What results from this failure of misery, deprivation, loss and perdition? Similarly, if his nafs feels inclined to do that which is prohibited, he should say to himself: There you are, you did what you wanted, but this pleasure will come to an end and will be followed by stress, distress, loss, missing out on reward and exposure to punishment, some of which on its own is enough to make a wise man refrain from (following his whims and desires).

This is one of the most beneficial things that a person may reflect upon. This is the character of the truly wise man, unlike the one who claims to have reason when that is not the case, for he – because of his ignorance and wrongdoing – gives precedence to immediate pleasure and comfort, regardless of the consequences. And Allah is the One Whose help we seek.

Then Allah says: ﴿Yet whoever does evil or wrongs his own soul but thereafter asks Allah for forgiveness will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ that is, whoever has the audacity to commit sin and transgression, then seeks forgiveness from Allah sincerely and in the proper manner, which requires admitting the sin, regretting it, giving it up and resolving not to go back to it, has a promise from the One Who does not break His promise of forgiveness and mercy. He will forgive the sin that he has committed and will erase its consequences of shortcomings and faults; He will restore to him what he had done of righteous deeds and will guide him in what remains of his lifespan; He will not make his sin a barrier to divine help, for He has already forgiven him, and if He has forgiven him, He will cancel the consequences that result from it.

It should be understood that evil deeds in general include all acts of disobedience, small and great. Similarly, wronging oneself in general includes wronging oneself by ascribing partners to Allah as well as lesser sins. But when the two are mentioned together, each is to be explained in the light of the other. So in this case evil deeds are understood as being wrongdoing that offends people, which means wronging them with regard to their physical well-being, wealth and honour.

Wronging oneself is to be understood as wrongdoing and sin that is between Allah and His slave. It is called wronging oneself because the person's nafs (self) is not his property, such that he may dispose of it as he wishes; rather it is the property of Allah (ﷻ) Who has made it a trust with which He has entrusted His slave and enjoined him to keep it (his nafs) on the straight path in word and deed. So he should strive to teach himself as he has been enjoined and strive to do what is required. Striving to follow any other path is wronging himself, betraying himself, and diverging himself from justice and fairness, the opposite of which is injustice and wrongdoing.

﴿And whoever earns sin, earns it only against his own soul﴾ – this includes everything that is a sin, small or great. Whoever does evil, the punishment for that in this world and the hereafter will fall upon him, and it will not go beyond him to anyone else, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another...﴾ (Fâṭir 35: 18)

But if evil deeds become prevalent and no one objects to them, then the punishment will become widespread and the burden of sin will encompass everyone. That does not contradict the rulings of this verse, because the one who fails to object to and denounce sin as he is required to do has earned sin.

This highlights the justice and wisdom of Allah, for He does not punish anyone for the sin of another, nor does He mete out a punishment any greater than that which is befitting to the sin. Hence He says: ﴿And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ that is, His is perfect knowledge and perfect wisdom.

By His knowledge and wisdom He knows about the sin and what results from it, what prompted it and the punishment that is due for it. He knows the situation of the sinner and that if he commits the sin because of the evil inclination of his nafs, even though most of the time he is obedient to Allah, He will forgive him and enable him to repent.

But if he commits the sin out of recklessness, not caring that his Lord is watching and not worrying about the punishment, then forgiveness is unlikely and it is unlikely that he will be helped to repent.

﴿But whoever commits an offence﴾ that is, commits a major sin
 ﴿or a sin﴾ that is, a lesser sin
 ﴿then blames it on an innocent person﴾ that is, he accuses someone else of this sin that he committed who is innocent of that, even though he may have committed other sins
 ﴿will bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin﴾ that is, he has taken upon himself the burden of accusing an innocent person and of

manifest sin. This indicates that this (false accusation) is a major sin that incurs punishment.

That is because he has combined a number of evils: he has incurred a burden of sin; then he accused one who did not do it of doing it; then he uttered a foul lie by declaring himself innocent and accusing an innocent person; then that led to punishment in this world which was ward off from the one who deserved it and was carried out on the one who did not deserve it; it also led to people talking about one who was innocent. And there are other evil consequences; we ask Allah to keep us safe from them and from all evils.

Then Allah mentions His blessing that He bestowed upon His Messenger (ﷺ) by protecting him from those who wanted to lead him astray:

﴿Were it not for Allah's grace towards you [O Muhammad], and His mercy, a party of them would have tried to lead you astray﴾. The commentators stated that the reason for revelation of these verses was that a family stole in Madinah, then when their theft was discovered, they feared scandal, so they took the stolen items and threw them into the house of someone who was innocent of that crime, and the thief asked his people to help him by going to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asking him to declare their companion innocent before the people. They said: He did not steal; rather the one who did that is the one in whose house the item is found, and he (our companion) is innocent. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) thought about declaring their companion innocent, then Allah revealed these verses as a reminder, explaining what really happened and warning the Messenger (ﷺ) against defending the treacherous, because defending the one who is in the wrong is misguidance. Misguidance is of two types: misguidance that results from lack of knowledge, which is ignorance of the truth; and misguidance in actions, which is doing something other than what one is obliged to do. Thus Allah protected His Messenger (ﷺ) from the type of misguidance that results from lack of knowledge (just as

He protected him from misguidance in the sense of doing something other than what he ought to do).

Here Allah tells us that their schemes and tricks backfired on them, as is the case with every treacherous person.

﴿But they only lead themselves astray﴾ because that trickery and treachery did not lead them to attain their goal, and they did not gain anything from it but loss, deprivation and sin.

This was a great blessing to His Messenger (ﷺ), namely the blessing of doing the right thing, being guided to do what must be done and being protected from every evil action.

Then Allah mentions the blessing of knowledge that He bestowed upon him: ﴿For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom﴾ that is, He has sent down to you this Holy Qur'an and the wise reminder, in which there is an explanation of all things and knowledge of the first and the last.

﴿wisdom﴾ either refers to the Sunnah, of which some of the early generations said: The Sunnah was revealed to him just as the Qur'an was revealed to him; or it refers to knowledge of the subtle realities and issues of Sharia, over and above knowledge of its rulings, seeing things properly and acting appropriately, and giving each thing priority according to its level of importance.

﴿and has taught you what you did not know﴾. This includes everything that Allah (ﷻ) taught him, because he, before prophethood came to him, was as Allah (ﷻ) described him:

﴿... You knew nothing of the scripture or matters of faith...﴾ (ash-Shoorâ 42: 52)

﴿Did He not find you unaware [of the path of truth]¹⁵ and guide you?﴾ (ad-Duhâ 93: 7)

¹⁵ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) always believed in the oneness of Allah (tawhîd), even before his prophethood began, but he was unaware of the path of Islam, and its rulings and teachings, until Allah guided him to it through revelation. (ash-Shawkâni; az-Zamakhshari; Ibn 'Âshoor).

Then Allah kept sending the revelation to him, teaching him and leading him in the way of perfection, until he reached a level of knowledge that could not be attained by anyone else among the earlier and later generations.

Thus he became the most knowledgeable of all people, acquired the most perfect qualities, good manners and character. Hence Allah said: «And the grace of Allah toward you is great indeed» (4: 113). His grace towards the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) is greater than His grace towards all other creatures.

The kinds of grace and blessings that Allah bestowed upon him cannot all be known or listed.



﴿لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾
(سورة النساء: ١١٤) ﴿١١٤﴾

4:114. There is no good in much of their private conversations, except for one who enjoins charity and good deeds, or seeks to bring about reconciliation between people. For the one who does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will give him an immense reward.

That is, there is nothing good in much of what people talk about. If there is nothing good in it, then it is either talking in which there is no benefit, such as empty talk that is permissible, or it is purely evil and harmful, such as all kinds of prohibited talk.

Then Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception, and says: «except for one who enjoins charity», whether that is in terms of wealth or knowledge,

or any beneficial thing. In fact it may also include acts of worship, such as *tasbeeh* or *tahmeed*, and so on.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Every *tasbeeh* is a charity, every *takbeer* is a charity, every *tahleel* is a charity, enjoining what is good is a charity, forbidding what is evil is a charity, and the intimacy of one of you (with his wife) is a charity...» (Muslim)

«and good deeds» – this refers to kindness and acts of worship, and everything that is known to be good according to both Sharia and common sense. When enjoining what is good is mentioned on its own, without mentioning forbidding what is wrong, then it includes forbidding what is wrong. That is because giving up evil is part of doing good, and doing what is good cannot be complete without giving up evil.

But when the two are mentioned together, then what is good refers to what is enjoined, and what is evil refers to what is forbidden.

«or seeks to bring about reconciliation between people» reconciliation can only be between two disputing parties. Conflict, disputes and mutual resentment lead to unlimited evil and division. Hence the Lawgiver enjoined bringing about reconciliation between people with regard to matters of blood, wealth and honour, and even when there are differences of religion, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: «And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves...» (Āl 'Imrān 3: 103)

«If two groups among the believers fight one another, then make peace between them. If one of them transgresses against the other [and rejects all efforts to make peace], then fight [all of you] against the one that transgresses, until it complies with the command of Allah...» (al-Hujurat 49: 9)

«reconciliation is better» (4: 128). The one who strives to bring about reconciliation between people is better than one who stands in

prayer, fasts and gives in charity. Allah will inevitably support him in his efforts and striving.

By the same token, Allah will not support the efforts of the one who strives to cause trouble among people, and he will not achieve his goal, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...verily Allah does not allow the work of the mischief-makers to thrive.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 81)

So when these things are done, it is good, as is indicated by this exception (to their private conversations).

But the completion and perfection of the reward will be in accordance with the level of one's intentions and sincerity. Hence Allah says: ﴿For the one who does that, seeking the pleasure of Allah, We will give him an immense reward﴾.

For this reason one should be sincere to Allah (ﷻ) in one's actions at all times and in everything good, so as to attain that great reward and get used to being sincere. Thus he will attain the reward in full, whether he fulfils his goal or not, because he has succeeded in forming the right intention and accompanied that with whatever effort he was able to make.



﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا نَبَّيْنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
تُولَٰئِكَ مَا تَأْتِي وَتُضْلَوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ١١٥-١١٦)

- 4:115. But whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We will leave him to that which he himself has chosen and cast him into hell – an evil journey's end.

4:116. Allah does not forgive the ascription of partners to Him, but He forgives anything other than that to whomever He wills; whoever ascribes partners to Allah has indeed gone far astray.

That is, whoever opposes the Messenger (ﷺ) and stubbornly rejects the message he has brought, after guidance has become clear to him through Qur'anic evidence and prophetic proof, and follows a path other than that of the believers – their path is their way of beliefs and actions

We will leave him to that which he himself has chosen that is, what he has chosen for himself, and We will forsake him and not lead him to goodness, because he saw the truth and recognised it, but he rejected it. His recompense from Allah is just and fair: He will leave him confused in his misguidance and will increase his misguidance further, as He says elsewhere:

...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]... (aṣ-Ṣaff 61: 5)

– and:

We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time... (al-An'ām 6: 110)

The meaning of these two verses indicates that whoever does not oppose the Messenger and follows the path of the believers, in the sense that his goal is to seek the Countenance of Allah, follow His Messenger (ﷺ) and adhere to the main body of the Muslims, then he commits sin or thinks of it, motivated by whims and desires and overwhelmed by his human nature, Allah will not abandon him to his own self and his shayṭān; rather He will rescue him by means of His kindness, bless him with His divine protection and protect him from evil, as Allah (ﷻ) said concerning Yoosuf:

...Thus We averted from him evil and shameful deeds. Verily, he was one of Our chosen slaves. (Yoosuf 12: 24)

– that is, because of his sincerity, We averted evil from him. The same applies to everyone who is sincere, as is indicated by the fact that the reason for protection is explained in general terms.

﴿and cast him into hell﴾ that is, We will punish him greatly therein
 ﴿an evil journey's end﴾ that is, final destination and eternal abode.

This threat for opposing the Prophet (ﷺ) and following a path other than that of the believers refers to various levels of punishment, according to the degree of opposition to the Prophet (ﷺ) and following a path other than that of the believers, and according to the degree of sin, minor or major – and no one knows the extent of that except Allah. Some of them will deserve to spend eternity in hell and will deserve all kinds of humiliation; others will deserve something less than that. Perhaps the second verse gives more details of this general statement.

The second verse tells us that Allah (ﷻ) will not forgive the sin of ascribing partners to Him, because this is a grave insult to the Lord of the worlds and a denial of His oneness; it implies regarding the created being who possesses no power to ward off harm from, or benefit, himself as equal to the One Who is in control and possesses the power to bring benefit or cause harm, the only One from Whom blessings come, and no one can ward off harm but He; He is utterly perfect in all aspects and completely independent of all needs.

One of the gravest kinds of wrongdoing and misguidance is not devoting worship to the One Who is like that and is so great, and directing any kind of devotion to a created being, who possesses none of the attributes of perfection or independence, and in fact without Allah is nothing, for he would not exist; he is imperfect, lacks independence and is in need in all respects.

Sins that are less than ascribing partners to Allah are subject to the divine will. If Allah wills, He will forgive them by His mercy and wisdom, and if He wills, He will punish for them by His justice and wisdom. This verse is quoted as proof for that on which this

Ummah is unanimously agreed, and it is protected from agreeing on something wrong.

The explanation for that is that Allah warned the one who forsakes the path of the believers of humiliation and hell. The path of the believers refers to everything that the believers adhere to of beliefs and actions.

If they agree on something being obligatory or encouraged or prohibited or disliked or permissible, then this is their path, and whoever goes against them in any of that, after consensus has been established among them concerning it, has followed a path other than theirs. This is indicated in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿You are the best community ever brought forth for [the benefit of] humankind; you enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong...﴾
(*Al 'Imrân* 3: 110)

The point is that Allah (ﷻ) stated that the believers of this Ummah do not enjoin anything but that which is right, so if they all agree that something is obligatory or recommended, then it is part of that which they enjoin. Therefore, based on this text, what they enjoin must be right and there is nothing beyond what is right except that which is wrong. Similarly, if they agree that something is forbidden, then it is something that they forbid, so it cannot be anything but wrong.

An example of that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Thus We have made of you an Ummah [nation, community] justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over humankind...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 143)

In this verse Allah tells us that He has made this Ummah justly balanced – that is, just and good – so that they might be witnesses over humankind in all things. So if they testify that some matter has been enjoined by Allah or forbidden by Him, or permitted, then their testimony is infallible and cannot be wrong, because they have knowledge of what they testify to and are fair in their testimony. If

it were otherwise, they would not be fair in their testimony and they would not have knowledge of it.

Another example is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ (4: 59).

From this we may understand that with regard to matters concerning which they did not dispute, rather they were agreed upon them, they are not instructed to refer them to the Qur'an and Sunnah, because what they agree upon cannot be but in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, so they cannot be contrary to them.

This verse and similar verses definitively prove that the consensus of this Ummah counts as binding evidence. Hence Allah describes the misguidance of the polytheists as reprehensible, as He says:



﴿إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا ۝١١٧ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ۝١١٨ وَلَا مُمِيزَةَ لَهُمْ وَلَا مَرْئِيَهُمْ فَلْيَغَيِّرُوا خَلْقَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا ۝١١٩ يَعْذِبُهُمْ وَيُخَيِّبُهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۝١٢٠ أُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ۝١٢١﴾ (سورة النساء: ١١٧-١٢١)

- 4:117. Instead of Him, they call upon none but female [deities]; they call upon none but a rebellious devil
- 4:118. whom Allah cursed, and he said: I will certainly take a designated portion of Your slaves,
- 4:119. And I will certainly lead them astray and fill them with false hopes. I will certainly order them to slit the ears of livestock and I will certainly order them to change the creation of Allah.

Whoever takes the Shayṭān as a protector [and helper] instead of Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss.

4:120. [Shayṭān] makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes; but Shayṭān makes promises to them only in order to deceive them.

4:121. For these, their abode shall be hell, and they will find no escape from it.

That is, what these polytheists call upon instead of Allah is only female, namely the idols which were given female names such as al-‘Uzzâ and Manât, and so on. It is well known that the name is indicative of the nature of the thing named, so if these idols were given imperfect, female names, that must indicate that the things that were called by those names must be imperfect and lacking in attributes of perfection. Allah tells us in more than one place in His Book that they neither create nor grant provision, and they do not protect their worshippers; in fact they cannot bring benefit to or ward off harm from themselves, and they cannot help themselves against anyone who intends ill towards them. They cannot hear or see, and they have no intellect. So how can one that is like this be worshipped, and devotion not be focused on the One to Whom belong the most beautiful names, sublime attributes, praise, perfection, glory, majesty, might, beauty, mercy, kindness and generosity, Who is unique in His power to create and control, and is supremely wise in all that He commands and decrees?

Can this be anything but the worst of the worst, indicative of the shortcomings of the one who does that and of his having reached the vilest of lows, more ignoble than can be imagined or described? Moreover, they are only worshipping the images of these imperfect idols; in reality they are worshipping nothing but the Shayṭān, who is their enemy and is seeking to destroy them, doing all that he can to achieve that. He is furthest removed from Allah; Allah has cursed

him and cast him far away from His mercy. Because Allah has cast him far away from His mercy, he is striving to cause people to be cast out from the mercy of Allah too.

﴿Verily, the Shayṭān is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only calls his followers so that they may become inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ (Fāfir 35: 6)

Hence Allah tells us of the Shayṭān's efforts to deceive people and how he makes evil and mischief fair-seeming to them, for he said to his Lord, swearing an oath: ﴿I will certainly take a designated portion of Your slaves﴾. The accursed one knew that he would not be able to deceive all the slaves of Allah, and that he would have no power over the sincere slaves of Allah; rather his power would be over those who take him as a friend and prefer to obey him rather than to obey their Lord.

Elsewhere he swore to deceive them and said:

﴿...I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen [and sincere] slaves among them.﴾ (Sād 38: 82-83)

This is what the evil one wanted and was certain of. Allah (ﷻ) told us that it would take place when He said:

﴿Iblees found his expectations¹⁶ concerning them to be correct, for they all followed him, except for a group of believers.﴾ (Saba' 34: 20)

Concerning this designated portion that he swore to Allah he would take, he stated what he wanted to do with them and what his plan was for them when he said: ﴿And I will certainly lead them astray﴾ that is, from the straight path – misguidance in terms of knowledge and misguidance in terms of deeds.

¹⁶ That is, he had expected that he would be able to mislead them, as he said:

﴿...I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen [and sincere] slaves among them.﴾ (Sād 38: 82-83)

﴿and fill them with false hopes﴾ that is, in addition to leading them astray, I shall make them wish to attain that which those who are rightly guided will attain. This is the essence of deception: he was not content merely to lead them astray; rather he went further and made the misguidance they followed appear fair-seeming to them. He made them go further in the way of evil until they did the deeds of the people of hell which are deserving of punishment, but they thought that they were deserving of paradise. This is applicable to the Jews, Christians and others, for they are as Allah tells us about them:

﴿And they say: No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian. That is their own wishful thinking...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 111)

﴿...Thus We have made fair-seeming to every nation its actions...﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 108)

﴿Say: Shall we tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted, while they think that what they do is right?﴾ (*al-Kahf* 18: 103-4)

Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the hypocrites, that on the Day of Resurrection they will say to the believers:

﴿...Were we not with you? They will say: Yes, but you gave in to confusion and temptation, you kept waiting [for some misfortune to befall us], you doubted, and you were deceived by false hopes, until the decree of Allah came to pass. Thus [Shayṭān] the deceiver deceived you concerning Allah.﴾ (*al-Hadeed* 57: 14)

﴿I will certainly order them to slit the ears of livestock﴾ that is, to cut the ears, as in the case of the *baḥeerah*, *sâ'ibah*, *waṣeelah* and *ḥâm*.¹⁷ Here some of the animals concerned are mentioned, to refer to

¹⁷ These words refer to certain categories of camels to which certain taboos were applied during the jāhiliyah.

Baḥeerah: a she-camel whose milk was dedicated to the idols.

Sâ'ibah: a she-camel that was let loose for the sake of their false gods and no load was to be carried on it. =

all of them. This is a kind of misguidance which implies prohibiting that which Allah has permitted, or permitting that which Allah has prohibited. That includes false beliefs and unjust rulings, which are among the worst types of misguidance.

﴿and I will certainly order them to change the creation of Allah﴾. That includes changing the outward appearance by means of tattooing, plucking eyebrows, filing the teeth for the purpose of beautification, and other things by means of which Shayṭān deceived them, so they changed and altered the creation of Allah (ﷻ).

This implies that the one who does such actions is discontent with Allah's creation, doubts His wisdom, and believes that what they do with their hands is better than the creation of the Most Merciful, and that they are not content with His decree and creation. That also includes changing the inner creation (that is, what one naturally believes). Allah (ﷻ) has created His slaves as inherently monotheist, with a natural inclination to accept and prefer the truth, but then the devils come to them and lead them away from that beautiful inclination, and make evil, ascription of partners to Allah, disbelief, immorality and disobedience appear fair-seeming to them.

Every infant is born in a state of *fiṭrah* (sound human nature) but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian and so on, changing thereby the natural inclination that Allah has created in people to affirm His oneness, love Him and know Him. The devils attack them in this regard as scavengers and wolves attack the lost sheep.

Were it not for Allah's kindness and generosity towards His sincere believing slaves, the same thing would happen to them as happened

= Waṣeelah: a she-camel that produced female offspring the first and second times she gave birth, with no male offspring in between; she was also let loose for the sake of the idols.

Hām: a stallion camel that was let loose for the sake of the idols after siring a particular number of offspring, and was not required to carry any load.

to these who were led astray. This is what happened to them because of their turning away from their Lord and Creator, and taking as a friend the enemy who intends ill towards them in all ways. Thus they became losers in this world and in the hereafter, and they ended up with regret and sorrow, having lost out. For this reason Allah says: ﴿Whoever takes the Shayṭân as a protector [and helper] instead of Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss﴾. What loss can be clearer and greater than that of the one who loses in terms of his religious and worldly well-being, and whose sins cause his doom? Therefore he incurs eternal misery and misses out on eternal bliss.

On the other hand, the one who takes his Lord as his friend and gives precedence to pleasing Him gains the most and succeeds immensely; he earns happiness in this world and the hereafter, and he will become content with that which Allah blesses him with. O Allah, no one can withhold what You give, and no one can give what You withhold. O Allah, take care of us among those of whom You take care, and pardon us among those whom You pardon.

Then Allah says: ﴿[Shayṭân] makes promises to them and fills them with false hopes﴾ that is, Shayṭân makes promises to those whom he strives to lead astray, but these promises also imply warnings, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The Shayṭân threatens you with poverty...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 268)

He threatens them that if they spend in Allah's cause, they will become poor, and he scares them by telling them that if they strive in jihad they will be killed, and so on, as Allah (ﷻ) tells us:

﴿That was only the Shayṭân, who tries to instil [in you] fear of his followers...﴾ (*Âl 'Imrân* 3: 175)

He tries to instil fear in them when they give precedence to pleasing Allah, by telling them of everything that may happen and everything that is not possible; he brainwashes them until they feel reluctant to do good. In like manner, he fills their minds with false hopes which,

in reality, are like mirages which contain nothing real. Hence He says: ﴿but Shayṭān makes promises to them only in order to deceive them. For these, their abode shall be hell﴾ that is, whoever follows the Shayṭān and turns away from his Lord, and becomes one of the followers and party of Iblees, his final abode will be hell ﴿and they will find no escape from it﴾ that is, no one to save them and no refuge; rather they will abide therein for ever and ever.

After mentioning the final destination of the friends of the Shayṭān, who are doomed, Allah then mentions the final destination of His close friends, who are the blessed:



﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٢)

- 4:122. But those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. [This is] a true promise from Allah, and who is truer in word than Allah?

﴿those who believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and the divine decree, both good and bad, in the manner in which they are instructed to believe in them, by understanding them, believing in them and affirming them ﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ that stem from faith.

That includes all enjoined deeds, both obligatory and encouraged, including beliefs, words and physical actions. Each deed brings a set reward, according to one's situation, attitude and intention, and the extent to which it complements faith and righteous deeds.

The individual will miss out on that set reward according to the degree to which he is lacking in faith and righteous deeds. This is in accordance with what is known of the wisdom and mercy of Allah and it is in accordance with His true promise, which is known to anyone who studies the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ).

Hence He mentions the set reward for that: ﴿We will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow﴾, in which there is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man, of all kinds of delicious food and drink, wondrous scenes, beautiful spouses, palaces, adorned chambers, amazing trees with low-hanging fruit, beautiful voices, and abundant blessings, where people will visit one another and remember the past, all of that in the gardens of paradise. And over and above all that will be Allah's being pleased with them, and their souls having the joy of being near to Him, seeing Him and listening to Him, which will make them forget all delights and pleasures, and were it not that Allah keeps them steadfast, they would soar and die with joy and happiness.

How sweet this blessing is, and how great is that which the Most Generous Lord has bestowed upon them. What happened to them of all goodness and joy is indescribable, and what makes it perfect and complete is the fact that they will abide for all eternity in those lofty abodes. Hence Allah says: ﴿to abide therein forever. [This is] a true promise from Allah, and who is truer in word than Allah?﴾ Almighty Allah speaks the truth, and His words and statements are of the utmost truthfulness, because His word is true and what it indicates is exactly what will happen; all that is indicated by His words will inevitably come to pass. The same is true of the words of His Messenger (ﷺ), because he does not say anything except by His command and does not utter anything except by His inspiration.



﴿لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ، وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا﴾ (١٢٣) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٣-١٢٤)

- 4:123. It will not be in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the People of the Book; whoever does evil will be requited for it, and he will not find, besides Allah, any protector or helper.
- 4:124. Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer – those will enter paradise, and they will not be wronged by even as much as the speck on a date stone.

﴿It﴾ that is, the matter of your salvation and purification ﴿will not be in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the People of the Book﴾. “Wishes” refers to self-talk that is not based on actions, and which is accompanied by mere claims; if one wished the opposite, it would be all the same. This is general in meaning and applies to all matters, so how about if it applies to the issues of faith and eternal happiness?

Allah has told us of the wishes of the People of the Book, and that they said:

﴿...No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian. That is their own wishful thinking...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 111)

And this is even more applicable in the case of those who have no Book or Messenger.

That also includes all those who claim to be Muslims, as is dictated by perfect justice and fairness. Merely claiming to belong to a religion, regardless of what it is, is of no use at all if the individual does not produce any evidence to support his claim. His deeds either confirm

that claim or demonstrate that it is false. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿whoever does evil will be requited for it﴾. This includes all those who do evil, because evil includes all kinds of sin, both minor and major sins. This also includes all kinds of requital, small or great, in this world or in the hereafter.

In this regard people are of differing levels, which no one knows except Allah. Some do few bad deeds and some do many. One whose deeds are all evil cannot be anything but a disbeliever, and if he dies without having repented, he will be requited with eternal, painful punishment. If a person's deeds are righteous and he is steadfast in following the straight path most of the time, but he sometimes commits some minor sins, then whatever befalls him of worry, distress, harm and some pains – whether they are physical or emotional, or caused by the loss of a loved one or wealth and so on – will be an expiation for (some of) his sins. This is also part of the requital for his (bad) deeds. Allah has ordained this out of kindness to His slaves, and there are many different degrees between these two cases (the one whose deeds are all good and the one whose deeds are all evil).

This requital for evil deeds in general is limited to those who do not repent, for the one who repents is like the one who did not commit sin, as is indicated by the texts.

﴿and he will not find, besides Allah, any protector or helper﴾ these words dispel any idea that may arise that the one who deserves punishment for his deeds could have a protector, helper or intercessor to avert from him that which he deserves (of punishment). Allah (ﷻ) tells us that this is not the case; he has no friend who can get him what he wants, and no protector who could ward off from him that which he fears, except his Lord and Sovereign.

﴿Whoever does righteous deeds﴾ – that includes all actions, including thoughts, ideas and beliefs, as well as physical actions. It also includes every doer of deeds, human or jinn, young or old, male or female. Hence Allah says: ﴿whether male or female, and is a

believer». Faith is the required condition for all deeds. No deed can be righteous or acceptable, or lead to reward, or ward off punishment, unless it is based on faith.

Deeds without faith are like the branches of a tree that was cut off from the root, or like a structure built on waves. Faith is the root and foundation, and the basis on which everything is built. This condition must be borne in mind whenever any good deed is mentioned in general terms: it should be understood that the reward for that deed is subject to the condition that it be based on faith.

«(those) that is, the ones who combine faith and righteous deeds «will enter paradise» which includes everything that one's heart may desire and that will delight one's eyes «and they will not be wronged by even as much as the speck on a date stone» that is, they will not be wronged to any degree, small or great, for what they did of good deeds; rather they will find it complete and multiplied greatly.



﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٥)

- 4:125. Who can be better in religion than one who submits himself [completely] to Allah, is a doer of good, and follows the religion of Ibrâheem, the monotheist? For Allah did take Ibrâheem as a close friend.

That is, nothing is better than the way of one who combines sincerity to Allah with submitting himself to Him, which is indicative of full submission to Allah both inwardly and outwardly, turning to Him and being devoted to Him, body and soul.

﴿is a doer of good﴾ that is, in addition to this devotion and submission, he follows the teachings of Sharia and the rulings with which Allah sent His Messenger (ﷺ) and that He revealed in His Books, and made them a way to be followed by the elite of His creation and their followers.

﴿and follows the religion of Ibrâheem﴾ that is, his teachings and path

﴿the monotheist [*haneef*﴾ that is, inclining¹⁸ away from polytheism towards monotheism, and away from created beings in order to focus and devote himself to the Creator.

﴿For Allah did take Ibrâheem as a close friend﴾. Close friendship is the highest level of love; this is the status that was obtained by the two close friends (*khaleels*) of Allah: Muhammad and Ibrâheem (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them both). Allah's love is for all the believers; Allah only took Ibrâheem as a close friend because he fulfilled the command that was enjoined upon him and he passed the test. Therefore Allah made him a leader of humankind, took him as His close friend and made him renowned among all people.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ۝﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٢٦)

4:126. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; verily Allah encompasses all things.

This verse highlights the fact that Allah (ﷻ) encompasses all things, hence He tells us that to Him belongs ﴿all that is in the heavens and

¹⁸ The word *haneef* (translated here as ﴿monotheist﴾) means one who inclines away from one thing towards something else.

on earth» that is, all creatures are His property and His slaves, and He is the only Master Who controls them. His knowledge encompasses all that may be known, His vision encompasses all that can be seen, His hearing encompasses all that may be heard, His will and decree control all that exists and His mercy encompasses the inhabitants of heaven and earth. Every creature is subject to His might and power, and all things submit to Him.



﴿وَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ ۖ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَى النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تَوْلُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَرَرَّعُونَ أَن تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضَعِّفِينَ مِنَ الْوُلَدِ وَأَن تَقُولُوا لِلَّيْتِمَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ۝﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٧)

- 4:127. They ask you [O Muhammad] for a ruling concerning women. Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning them, [as does] that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them [of mahr and inheritance], yet you desire to marry them, and concerning helpless children, that you should treat orphans equitably. Whatever you do of good deeds, Allah has full knowledge of it.

Asking for a ruling is a request for an explanation of the Islamic verdict concerning the matter asked about. Allah tells us that the believers asked the Messenger (ﷺ) about the ruling on women that has to do with them, and Allah (ﷻ) answered this question Himself. He said: «{Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning them}», so act in accordance with the ruling He gives you in all affairs pertaining to women, namely giving them their rights, not mistreating them in general terms and in specific cases.

This command is general in meaning and includes all that Allah has ordained, both commands and prohibitions, with regard to women, wives and others, young and old.

Then after making a general statement, Allah refers specifically to the instruction to be kind to the weak, namely orphans and children, out of concern for them and warning against neglecting their rights, as He says:

«[as does] that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans» that is, He also explains to you through that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans

«to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them». This highlights the situation that really existed at that time. If a female orphan was under the care of a man, he would undermine her rights and mistreat her, either by devouring her wealth, all or some of it, or by preventing her from getting married so that he could benefit from her wealth, for fear of losing her wealth to her husband; or he would take some of her mahr that was given to her when she got married, by stipulating a condition or otherwise. This was the case if he was not interested in marrying her, but if he did want to marry her and she was beautiful and had wealth, he would not be fair with regard to her mahr; rather he would give her less than she deserved. All of these things come under the heading of injustice and wrongdoing mentioned in this text. Hence Allah said:

«yet you desire to marry them» – the original Arabic may mean either you desire to marry them or you do not desire to marry them. Both cases are discussed above.

«and concerning helpless children» – Allah also gives you a ruling concerning helpless small children: you should give them their rights, of inheritance and otherwise, and you should not seize their wealth unlawfully and wrongfully.

«that you should treat orphans equitably» that is, with complete justice. That includes paying attention to the way in which you raise

them, by making them adhere to the commands of Allah and what He has enjoined upon His slaves. Guardians are responsible for that, for making them adhere to that which Allah has made obligatory.

The Arabic term translated above as treating (equitably) may also mean taking care of their worldly interests by tending their wealth and looking for the best way to invest it for them, and handling it only in the best manner. At the same time they should not do favours to their friends or anyone else at the expense of the orphans, such as giving a girl in their care in marriage to a friend, and so on, in such a way that undermines their rights. This highlights Allah's mercy towards His slaves, as He instructs them to look after the interests of those who cannot take care of themselves because they are in a weak position and have lost their father.

Then Allah encourages kindness in general terms, as He says: ﴿Whatever you do of good deeds﴾ to orphans and others, ﴿Allah has full knowledge of it﴾ that is, His knowledge encompasses the deeds of those who do good, whether they are few or many, good or the opposite, and He will requite each person in accordance with his deeds.



﴿وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٨)

- 4:128. If a woman fears ill treatment or indifference on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they settle the matter amicably between themselves [by compromising on their rights], for reconciliation is better, even though avarice is ever-present in human souls. If you do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well aware of all that you do.

That is, if a woman fears ill treatment from her husband, meaning that he will look down at her, have no desire for her and be indifferent to her, then in this case it is better to bring about reconciliation between them, by means of the woman giving up some of her Islamically-affirmed rights to her husband, so that she could remain with him. This may be done by her agreeing to less than she is entitled to in terms of either maintenance, clothing, accommodation or a share of his time, by waiving some of her rights, or she may give her day and night to her husband or her co-wife.

If they both agree to that, there is nothing wrong with it and there is no blame on them in that regard, either on her or her husband. In that case it is permissible for her husband to stay with her according to these terms, and this is better than separation. Hence Allah says: ﴿for reconciliation is better﴾. From the general meaning of this phrase it may be understood that reconciliation between two parties who have rights over one another or between whom there is a dispute on any matter is better than each party insisting on his or her full rights, because doing so brings about reconciliation, preserves harmony and creates an atmosphere of tolerance.

Reconciliation is permissible in all matters, unless it permits something that is prohibited or prohibits something that is permissible, in which case it is not reconciliation; rather it is injustice.

It should be noted that no ruling can be implemented or carried out unless there is a reason for doing so and there are no impediments to doing so. That includes this important ruling, namely reconciliation. Allah (ﷻ) mentioned the reason for that, by pointing out that it is better, and what is better is something sought by every rational person. Moreover, Allah has enjoined it and encouraged it, therefore the believer should be more eager to seek it and attain it.

The impediment is mentioned in the words: ﴿even though avarice is ever-present in human souls﴾ that is, human souls are created with an inclination towards avarice, which makes the individual reluctant

to give what is due to others and makes him keen to demand his own rights. Souls are naturally inclined towards that, so you should strive to rid yourself of this bad characteristic and replace it with its opposite, which is tolerance and an easy-going nature. That means giving what is due to others and being content with some of that to which you are entitled.

When a person is helped and guided to acquire this good characteristic, it then becomes easy for him to reconcile with his opponent, and that paves the way to reaching the goal more easily. This is in contrast to the one who does not strive to remove avarice from his heart, so it becomes difficult for him to reach an agreement and reconcile with others, because he will not be content unless he gets all of his dues, and he will not be content to give all that he is required to give to others. And if the other party is also like him, the problem will become worse.

Then Allah says: ﴿If you do good and practise self-restraint﴾ that is, do good in worshipping the Creator, which means worshipping your Lord as if you can see Him, for even though you cannot see Him, He sees you; and do good to other people in all ways, benefiting them with one's wealth, knowledge or status, or in other ways ﴿and practise self-restraint﴾ and fear Allah by doing all that is enjoined and refraining from all that is prohibited, or do good by doing what is enjoined and fear Allah by refraining from that which is prohibited. ﴿Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾ – He encompasses it with His knowledge, both as it outwardly appears to be and what is hidden of intentions; He records it and will requite you for it in full.



﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَمْدِلُوا بَيْنَ الْإِنْسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فَتَدْرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا

رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٩)

4:129. You will never be able to treat your wives with absolute equity, however much you may desire to do so. But do not incline too much to one of them so as to leave the other hanging. If you do what is right and refrain from injustice, verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Here Allah (ﷻ) states that husbands will not be able to be fully equitable between their wives, because equity requires equal love and being inclined equally to all of them, and then acting accordingly, and this is simply not possible. Therefore Allah forgives that which cannot be done, and forbids that which is possible (of inequity), as He says: ﴿But do not incline too much to one of them so as to leave the other hanging﴾ that is, do not incline in such a way that you do not fulfil their obligatory rights; rather do what you can to treat them equitably.

Therefore with regard to maintenance, clothing, sharing one's time between them and so on, you must be fair and treat them equitably. This is in contrast to love, intercourse and so on. If the husband fails to give his wife her rights, then she will be left hanging, unlike the one who has no husband, so she is certain of her situation and can prepare to find a husband and get married, and also unlike the one who has a husband who gives her her rights.

﴿If you do what is right﴾ with regard to the relationship between you and your wives, by forcing yourself to do that which you may not be inclined to do, seeking reward thereby and doing your duty towards your wife, and also reconcile with other people concerning disputes that you may have with them. This indicates that it is encouraged to follow every path that may lead to reconciliation, as mentioned above.

﴿and refrain from injustice﴾ that is, by doing what is enjoined, refraining from what is forbidden, and accepting with patience what is decreed

﴿verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He will forgive whatever you have done of sins and falling short in your obligatory

duties, and He will have mercy on you as you have been kind to your wives and shown them compassion.



﴿وَإِنْ يَفْرَقَا يَغْنِ اللَّهُ كِلَا مِّنْ سَعَتِهِۦ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (سورة

النساء: ١٣٠)

4:130. But if they separate, Allah will compensate both out of His abundance, for Allah is All-Encompassing, Most Wise.

This is a third option for spouses: if it is not possible to bring about reconciliation, then there is nothing wrong with separating.

﴿But if they separate﴾ by means of *talâq*, annulment of the marriage, *khul'*, or otherwise

﴿Allah will compensate both﴾ spouses ﴿out of His abundance﴾ that is, out of His bounty and His vast and all-encompassing kindness. He will compensate the husband with a wife who is better for him than her, and He will make her independent of means by His grace and bounty. If her share of provision stops coming from her husband, then her provision will come from the One Who guarantees the provision of all and takes care of their interests, and perhaps Allah will bless her with a husband who is better than him.

﴿for Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ that is, His grace is immense and His mercy is vast. His mercy and kindness reach as far as His knowledge reaches.

But in addition to that, He is also ﴿Most Wise﴾ that is, He bestows His grace and mercy, or withholds them, on the basis of wisdom. If His wisdom dictates that He should withhold His kindness from some of His slaves, because of some deeds on their part due to which they do not deserve His kindness, He will withhold it from them on the basis of justice and mercy.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

﴿١٣٢﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣١-١٣٢)

- 4:131. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. We have instructed those who were given the scripture before you, as well as you [O Muslims], to fear Allah. But if you disbelieve, then surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise.
- 4:132. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us how vast and great is His sovereignty, which means that He is in control of all things and ordains all things, through His Sharia and by His will and decree.

Through His Sharia, Allah instructed the earlier and later generations, the people of the previous and later Books, to fear Him by following His commands and heeding His prohibitions. He also issued laws and regulations, rewarding those who follow His instructions, and punishing those who neglect them and overlook them with the most painful punishment. Hence He says: ﴿But if you disbelieve﴾ by failing to fear Allah and by associating with Allah that for which He has not sent any authority down to you, then you are only harming yourselves; you are not harming Allah in the slightest or diminishing His sovereignty. He has slaves who are better, greater and more numerous than you, who obey Him and submit to His command. Therefore He refers to that when He says: ﴿But if you disbelieve, then

surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise». He is Most Generous and Most Kind. He bestows His bounty from the vast reserves of His mercy, which are never diminished by His spending, which continues all day and all night. If the people of the heavens and the people of the earth, the first and last of them, were all to come together and each one of them was to ask for all that he wishes for, that would not detract in the slightest from His sovereignty. He is generous and possessed of abundant wealth, and His giving and His punishing take just one word; His command, when He wills something, is merely to say, 'Be!' and it is.

By virtue of His being completely self-sufficient He is perfect in all attributes, because if there were to be any shortcomings or imperfections in Him, that would be a kind of need for that quality (in order to perfect it). But He possesses all the attributes of perfection, and in each attribute He has the highest level of perfection. One of the aspects of His self-sufficiency is that He has no wife or child, and no partner in His sovereignty, and no supporter or helper in His running the affairs of His dominion. Another aspect of His self-sufficiency is that the inhabitants of the upper and lower realms are in need of Him in all their situations and affairs, and they ask of Him for all their needs, small and great. Allah (ﷻ) is in charge of all their needs and requests; He meets their needs, honours them, bestows His favour upon them out of kindness, and guides them.

«Worthy of all praise» – (al-Hameed) is one of the majestic names of Allah (ﷻ), which indicates that He alone is the One Who deserves all praise, love and honour, because of what He possesses of the attributes of praise, namely the attributes of beauty and majesty, and because of what He bestows upon His creation of immense blessings. Therefore He is praiseworthy in all ways.

How beautiful is this pairing of these two noble names: «Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise», for He is independent of means and

praiseworthy. He is perfect in His self-sufficiency and He is perfect in His praiseworthiness, and He is perfect for having both of these attributes together.

Then He repeats that His sovereignty encompasses all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and that He is in charge of all things. In other words, He knows all things and is running the affairs of all things on the basis of His wisdom, and that is part of being in charge of things in the most perfect sense. Being in charge of things requires knowledge of what one is in charge of, as well as strength and the ability to do the job and run affairs. That running of affairs should be based on wisdom and what serves the best interests, for any shortcoming is indicative of shortcomings in the one who is in charge of things, and Allah (ﷻ) is far above having any shortcomings.



﴿إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا
 ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا
 بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٣-١٣٤)

- 4:133. If He so willed, He could destroy you, O people, and bring others [in your stead], for He has power to do that.
- 4:134. Whoever seeks the reward of this world, then with Allah is the reward of this world and of the hereafter. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

That is, He is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise, the One Who is possessed of complete power and you are subject to His will.

﴿If He so willed, He could destroy you, O people, and bring others [in your stead]﴾ that is, other people who would be more obedient to Allah than you and better than you. This is a warning to the people

against persisting in disbelief and turning away from their Lord. Allah does not care about them if they do not obey Him; He may give them respite and allow them to get carried away, but He will not leave them alone for ever (and He is always aware of them).

Then Allah tells us that in the case of one whose main focus and ambition is low, and does not go beyond the reward of this world, and he does not care about the hereafter, his efforts are falling short and he is short-sighted, yet despite that he will not get anything of the reward of this world except what Allah has decreed for him. For He is the Sovereign of all things, in His command is the reward of this world and the hereafter. Therefore they are to be sought from Him and His help is to be sought to acquire both, for that which is with Him cannot be attained except by means of obedience to Him, and both religious and worldly aims can only be achieved by seeking His help and always demonstrating one's need of Him.

He is supremely wise in guiding and helping those whom He guides and helps, and in forsaking those Whom he forsakes, and in His giving and withholding. Hence He says: «Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing».

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:



يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوَّٰمِيْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ شٰهَدَآءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلٰى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ
اَلْوٰلِدِيْنَ وَالْاَقْرَبِيْنَ اِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا اَوْ فَقِيْرًا ۗ فَاَللّٰهُ اَوَّلٰى بِمَا هُمْ لَا تَتَّبِعُوْا الْهَوٰى اَنْ
تَعْدِلُوْا ۗ وَاِنْ تَلَوْا اَوْ تَعْرِضُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾ (سورة النساء:

(١٣٥)

- 4:135. O you who believe, be steadfast in justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah can

best take care of both. So do not follow your emotions, lest you swerve from justice. If you distort your testimony or decline to give it, then verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves to ﴿be steadfast in justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah﴾. The word *qawwām* (translated here as ﴿steadfast﴾) is an intensive form of the word. What is meant is: in all your affairs, be steadfast in standing up for justice, which means being just with regard to the dues of Allah and the dues of His slaves. Justice with regard to the dues of Allah means not using His blessings as a means to disobey Him; rather they should be used as a means to do righteous deeds.

Justice with regard to the dues of other people means paying all dues that you owe to others, just as you demand your own dues. So you must spend on obligatory maintenance, pay debts, and treat others with a good attitude as you would like to be treated.

One of the greatest types of justice is justice with regard to views and opinions, and those who hold those views. So you should not judge in favour of one of two views, or one of two disputants, because of his affiliation or because of your inclination towards one of the two. Rather you should make it your aim to judge between them on the basis of justice and fairness. Another aspect of justice is giving testimony of what you know, regardless of the way in which you know it, even if that is against loved ones or against oneself. Hence Allah says: ﴿and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah can best take care of both﴾. That is: do not favour the rich man because of his wealth, or the poor man out of mercy towards him – or so you claim; rather you should give testimony on the basis of truth, regardless of who may be affected.

Being steadfast in justice is one of the most important matters, and is one of the most indicative of the religious commitment, piety

and status in Islam of the one who is just. The one who is sincere to himself or wants to save himself must pay the utmost attention to justice, make it his focus, resolve to attain it, and strive to rid himself of all obstacles and barriers that prevent him from adhering to justice and acting accordingly.

The greatest barrier to that is following whims and desires. Hence Allah (ﷻ) points out the importance of ridding oneself of this barrier, as He says: ﴿So do not follow your emotions﴾ that is, do not follow your own emotions, whims and desires that are contrary to the truth, lest – by doing so – you swerve from the right path and are not guided to justice, for whims and desires will either make a person blind, so that he sees the truth as false and falsehood as true, or he may recognise the truth but fail to follow it because of his whims and desires. The one who is saved from his whims and desires has been guided to the truth and to the straight path.

When Allah stated that it is essential to be steadfast in justice, He also forbade the opposite of that, which is distorting one's testimony and the like, twisting one's words in order to avoid stating the truth in all aspects or in some aspects. That includes distorting one's testimony and not giving it in full, or applying one's testimony to a different issue. All of that comes under the heading of distorting testimony, because it is a deviation from the truth.

﴿or decline to give it﴾ that is, fail to be just as you are enjoined to be, such as the witness withholding his testimony, or the judge not giving his verdict that he should give.

﴿then verily Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾ that is, He encompasses with His knowledge all that you do, both in secret and openly. This is a stern warning to the one who distorts his testimony or declines to give it. It is more appropriate that this be addressed to the one who judges on the basis of falsehood or gives false testimony, because his offence is greater; the former only failed to do what is

right, but the latter fails to do what is right and also does what is wrong.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَٰبِ الَّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَٰبِ الَّذِى أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ ءَ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَٰئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٦)

4:136. O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the Book which He has sent down to His Messenger and the Books which He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray.

It should be noted that commands and instructions are either addressed to the person who is not doing something, so this is an instruction to start doing it, such as the command addressed to those who do not believe, telling them to believe, as in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who have been given the scripture, believe in what We have revealed [to Muhammad], confirming what is with you...﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 47)

– or they are addressed to the one who has started to do something; in this case it is an instruction to correct what he is doing and to go further and do what he is not already doing. An example of that is what Allah says in this verse, instructing the believers to believe. That is an implicit instruction to do that which will correct their faith on the basis of sincerity, to avoid that which may spoil it, and to repent from anything that may undermine faith.

This is also an implicit instruction to do that which the believer is lacking of attaining Islamic knowledge and doing righteous deeds.

Every time any text reaches him and he understands its meaning and believes it, that is part of the belief which is enjoined. The same applies to all inward and outward actions: they are all part of faith, as is indicated by many texts and as the early generations of the Ummah were unanimously agreed.

Then one should continue in that way and remain steadfast until death, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 102)

Here Allah instructs us to believe in Him and in His Messenger (ﷺ), the Qur'an, and the previous Books. All of this is part of the obligatory faith, without which a person cannot be a believer; he should believe in general terms with regard to that which he does not know the details of, and in detail with regard to that of which he comes to know in detail. The one who believes as enjoined in this manner has indeed been guided and will succeed.

﴿Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray﴾ – and what misguidance can be greater than the misguidance of one who forsakes the straight path of guidance and follows the path that leads to the painful punishment?

It should be understood that disbelieving in any of these things is like disbelieving in all of them, because they are interconnected and it is not possible to believe in some of them without believing in others.

Then Allah says:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَزَادُوا كُفْرًا لَّعَلَّ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغَيِّرَ

لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٧)

4:137. Those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe [again], then disbelieve [again], and thereafter grow hardened in their disbelief – Allah will not forgive them nor guide them to any path [that leads to truth].

That is, the one who repeatedly disbelieves after having believed, so he is guided and then misguided, and he sees then he becomes blind, and he believes then he disbelieves and persists and increases in his disbelief, is far removed from divine help and guidance to the straight path, and he is far removed from forgiveness, because he has produced the greatest impediment to attaining it. His disbelief is a punishment and becomes part of his nature that will not disappear, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ (as-Saff 61: 5)

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 110)

This verse indicates that if they do not increase in disbelief, rather they come back to faith and give up what they were following of misguidance, then Allah will forgive them, even if they apostatised repeatedly. If this is the case with regard to disbelief, then it is more appropriate that in the case of other sins that are less grave than disbelief, if a person commits them repeatedly then turns back to Allah and repents, Allah will forgive him again.



﴿بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝ الَّذِينَ يَتَخَذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبِئِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةُ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۝﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٨-١٣٩)

- 4:138. Give tidings to the hypocrites, that theirs will be a painful punishment.
- 4:139. [As for] those who take the disbelievers as allies¹⁹ rather than the believers, are they seeking power with them? Verily all power belongs to Allah.

The word translated here as «tidings» is usually used to refer to good, but may sometimes refer to evil, as in this verse. Allah says: «Give tidings to the hypocrites» that is, those who make an outward display of being Muslims, whilst concealing disbelief; give them the worst tidings, namely tidings of the painful punishment, because of their love for the disbelievers, and their taking them as allies and supporting them, and their failing to take the believers as allies. What made them do that? Are they seeking power with them?

This is how the hypocrites really are. They think negatively of Allah and they lack certain faith that Allah will help His believing slaves. They focus on some means of power that the disbelievers have and they fail to look beyond that, so they take the disbelievers as allies, seeking power with them and seeking their help.

But in fact all power belongs to Allah; the forelocks of all people are in His Hand and His will concerning them is always done. He has guaranteed to support His religion and His believing slaves, even if that is after some tests for His believing slaves and after causing the enemy to prevail over them temporarily. The ultimate outcome is always in favour of the believers.

In this verse there is a stern warning against taking the disbelievers as allies and failing to take the believers as allies, because that is one of the characteristics of the hypocrites. Faith dictates that we should love the believers and take them as allies, and hate the disbelievers and regard them as enemies.

¹⁹ The word *awliyā'*, translated here as «allies», may also mean protectors, supporters, close friends, and so on.



﴿وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِثْلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ۝١٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرْتَبِصُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَوْذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ۚ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ۝١٤١﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٠-١٤١)

- 4:140. He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being rejected and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they begin to talk of other things; otherwise, you would be like them. Verily Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together in hell.
- 4:141. [The hypocrites are] those who are waiting and watching to see what happens to you. If Allah grants you a victory, they say: Were we not with you? But if the disbelievers meet with a success, they say [to them]: Did we not help you win, and protect you from the believers? But Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will not grant the disbelievers means to prevail over the believers.

Allah has explained to you – in what He has revealed to you – that His shar‘i rulings are to be followed when attending gatherings in which disbelief and sin are present:

﴿He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being rejected and ridiculed﴾ that is, being belittled. That is because what is required of every accountable person with regard to the revelations of Allah is to believe in them, then venerate them and respect them. That is the purpose for which they were revealed, and it is the purpose for which Allah created His

creation. The opposite of belief is rejection of them, and the opposite of respecting them is mocking them and scorning them. That includes the arguments that the disbelievers and hypocrites may come up with to invalidate the revelations of Allah and support their disbelief.

The same also applies to innovators of various types. Their argument in support of their falsehood implies disrespect towards the revelations of Allah, because the revelation only supports the truth, and does not contain anything but truth. And in fact this also applies to attending gatherings of sin and immorality, in which the commands and prohibitions of Allah are flouted and the limits that He has set for His slaves are transgressed. This ruling also includes the prohibition on sitting with them, ﴿until they begin to talk of other things﴾ that is, things other than disbelief in the revelations of Allah and ridiculing them.

﴿otherwise﴾ that is, if you sit with them in the situation mentioned, ﴿you would be like them﴾ because then you would be approving of their disbelief and ridicule, and the one who approves of sin is like the one who does it. The point is that whoever attends a gathering in which Allah is disobeyed is obliged to object to them if he is able to, or to get up and leave if he is not able to do so.

﴿Verily Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together in hell﴾ just as they came together as allies in their disbelief. The fact that they outwardly appeared to be with the believers will not benefit the disbelievers (or hypocrites), as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿On that day, the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to the believers: Wait for us, so that we may have some of your light...﴾
(*al-Hadeed* 57: 13)

Then Allah highlights how the hypocrites take the disbelievers as allies and show enmity towards the believers:

﴿[The hypocrites are] those who are waiting and watching to see what happens to you﴾ that is, they are waiting to see how you will

end up, and whether the outcome will be good or bad for you; they have prepared a response in either case, according to their hypocrisy.

﴿If Allah grants you a victory, they say: Were we not with you?﴾ They pretend that they were with the believers both outwardly and inwardly, so that they will be safe from criticism and aspersions, and so that they will have a share of the booty and *fay*’, and so that they will be able to ask for help.

﴿But if the disbelievers meet with a success﴾. He did not say victory, because they do not attain victory in the sense of permanently prevailing; rather it is just a success that does not mean the end of the matter, by the wisdom of Allah.

If that happens, ﴿they say [to them]: Did we not help you win, and protect you from the believers?﴾, trying to show them how much they care about them by not having fought them when they were able to, and how they tried to prevent the believers by all possible means from fighting the disbelievers, such as weakening them, discouraging them from fighting, supporting the enemy against them, and other means for which they are well known.

﴿But Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection﴾ that is, He will reward the believers both inwardly and outwardly in paradise, and He will punish the hypocrites and polytheists, both men and women.

﴿Allah will not grant the disbelievers means to prevail over the believers﴾ that is, He will not grant them authority or power over them; rather a group of the believers will continue to adhere to the truth, receiving divine support, and they will not be harmed by those who forsake them or oppose them.

Allah still grants the believers the means of victory and protection against the disbelievers, as is well known. Even though some Muslims are ruled by disbelieving groups, they are still treated with respect and are not persecuted for their religion, and they are not regarded

as insignificant by them. Rather they have full support from Allah, to Him be praise first and last, outwardly and inwardly.



﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَدِيعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَىٰ
رِءَاءُونَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا
إِلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٢-١٤٣)

- 4:142. The hypocrites seek to outwit Allah but it is He Who outwits them. When they stand up to pray, they stand up reluctantly, only to be seen by people, and they remember Allah only a little,
- 4:143. Wavering in between, belonging neither to these nor those. For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them].

Here Allah tells us about how the hypocrites were with regard to their abhorrent characteristics and conduct, and how they tried to outwit Allah (ﷻ) by making an outward display of faith whilst concealing their disbelief, thinking that this would deceive Allah and that He would not know of it or expose their tricks to His slaves. But in fact Allah outwitted them, because merely by being like that and behaving in this manner they were fooling themselves. What deceit can be greater than that of one who strives to do something which then backfires on him and brings him disgrace, humiliation and deprivation? That on its own is indicative of a lack of maturity, because in addition to it being a sin, they thought that it was something good, and they thought that it was a sign of smartness and cunning. This is what ignorance and misguidance do to a person!

With regard to His outwitting them on the Day of Resurrection, Allah says:

﴿On that day, the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to the believers: Wait for us, so that we may have some of your light. It will be said: Go back and seek light elsewhere. Then a wall will be set up between them, which will have a gate, on the inside of which there will be mercy and on the outside there will be punishment. The hypocrites will call out to the believers: Were we not with you?...﴾
(al-Hadeed 57: 13-14)

One of their characteristics is that ﴿When they stand up to pray﴾ – if they do so at all – which is the most important physical act of worship

﴿they stand up reluctantly﴾, finding it burdensome and resenting having to do it. Reluctance only stems from a lack of interest in their hearts. Were it not that their hearts are devoid of longing for Allah and for that which is with Him, and are lacking in faith, they would not be so reluctant.

﴿only to be seen by people﴾ – this is what is hidden in their hearts and this is the motive for their deeds: to be seen by people. They want people to see them and respect and honour them, and they are not acting out of sincerity towards Allah. Hence ﴿they remember Allah only a little﴾, because their hearts are filled with the desire to show off. Remembrance of Allah and persistence therein can only come from a believer whose heart is filled with love and reverence for Allah.

﴿Wavering in between, belonging neither to these nor those﴾ that is, they wander between the believers and the disbelievers; they are not believers both outwardly and inwardly, and they are not disbelievers both outwardly and inwardly. Deep in their hearts they are with the disbelievers, but outwardly they are with the believers, and this is the worst possible misguidance. Hence Allah says: ﴿For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them]﴾ and you will never make him give up his way of misguidance, because the door of mercy has been closed to him and has been replaced with wrath.

These blameworthy characteristics indicate that the believers are possessed of the opposite, namely sincerity and truthfulness, both outward and inward. There is no mystery as to what they are; they are enthusiastic in prayer and worship, and they remember Allah (ﷻ) a great deal, because Allah has guided them to the straight path. So let the wise person think about these two groups and choose whichever of them he wants. And Allah is the source of strength.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
يَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٤)

4:144. O you who believe, do not take the disbelievers as allies rather than the believers. Do you want to give Allah a clear case against you?

Having stated that one of the characteristics of the hypocrites is that they take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers, Allah then forbids His believing slaves to have this abhorrent characteristic, and to resemble the hypocrites, because that would inevitably ﴿give Allah a clear case against you﴾. In other words, it would constitute clear proof that you should be punished, because We have warned against it and We have stated that taking the disbelievers as allies leads to negative consequences, so doing that after receiving this warning deserves punishment.

This verse is indicative of the perfect justice of Allah and highlights the fact that Allah does not punish anyone before establishing proof against him. This is also a warning against sin, because Allah has a clear case against the one who commits sin.



﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴾ (١٤٥) إِلَّا
 الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ
 بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾ (سورة النساء)

(١٤٧-١٤٥)

- 4:145. The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the fire; you will not find any helper for them,
- 4:146. Except those who repent and mend their ways, hold fast to Allah and become sincere in their devotion to Allah [alone]; then they will be with the believers. And Allah will give the believers an immense reward.
- 4:147. Why would Allah punish you, if you are grateful and believe? Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing.

Here Allah tells us of the ultimate destination of the hypocrites: they will be in the lowest depths of hell and theirs will be the worst punishment. They will be below other disbelievers, because they shared their disbelief in Allah and opposition to His Messengers, but in addition to that they engaged in trickery and deceit. They planned to oppose the believers in many subtle and unnoticed ways, arranging all of that in such a way that they would still be regarded as Muslims and thus acquire that which they were not entitled to. For this and other reasons they are deserving of the worst punishment; no one can save them from Allah's punishment and no helper can ward off any part of His punishment. This is general in meaning and applies to every hypocrite, except those among them whom Allah blessed by enabling them to repent from evil deeds and ﴿mend their ways﴾ for the sake of Allah, both outwardly and inwardly

﴿hold fast to Allah﴾ and seek His help to bring them benefits and ward off harm from them

﴿and become sincere in their devotion to Allah [alone]﴾ – this refers to sincerity in submission to Allah (Islam), faith and ihsân.²⁰

Thus they sought the Countenance of Allah in their deeds, both outward and inward, and were saved from showing off and hypocrisy. Those who have these characteristics ﴿will be with the believers﴾ that is, in this world, in al-barzakh, and on the Day of Resurrection ﴿And Allah will give the believers an immense reward﴾, the nature of which no one knows except Allah; it is something that no eye has seen, no ear has heard and it has not crossed the mind of man.

Contemplate how Allah singled out for mention holding fast and sincerity, even though these are implied in the words ﴿mend their ways﴾, because holding fast and being sincere are part of mending one's ways and there is a great need for both, especially in this critical situation where hypocrisy is deeply entrenched in people's hearts, and nothing can remove it except holding fast to Allah and constantly turning to Him and expressing one's need of His help in order to ward off hypocrisy. Sincerity is diametrically opposed to hypocrisy, hence Allah mentions both it and holding fast to Him because of the virtue of these two deeds and because of the fact that all deeds, both outward and inward, are based on them and there is a profound need for them in this context.

Contemplate how, when Allah refers to the hypocrites alongside the believers, He did not say "and He will give them a great reward", even though the context is talking about the hypocrites. Rather He said ﴿And Allah will give the believers an immense reward﴾. That is because this is a general principle which Allah repeats frequently

²⁰ Ihsân, as described in the well-known hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, means:

«...to worship Allah as if you can see Him, for although you cannot see Him, He can see you.»

in the Qur'an. If the context is discussing some minor issues, and Allah wants to refer to some reward or punishment connected to the minor issues, and that minor issue comes under the same general heading, He connects the reward to that general heading under which that minor issue and others come, so that no one would think that the ruling is limited only to this minor issue. This is one of the brilliant subtleties of the Qur'an. Thus the former hypocrite who repents is included with the believers and will have the same reward as them.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the perfect nature of His self-sufficiency and the vastness of His forbearing, mercy and kindness: ﴿Why would Allah punish you, if you are grateful and believe?﴾. Because Allah is Appreciative and All-Knowing, He will give those who carry the heavy burden of commitment for His sake and persist in doing righteous deeds an immense reward and abundant kindness. Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will give him something better than it.

Furthermore, He knows how you appear outwardly and what is in your hearts, and He knows what you do and what it is based on, be it sincerity or the opposite. He wants you to repent and turn back to Him, then if you turn to Him, why should He punish you? He does not find any joy in punishing you and He does not benefit from punishing you; rather the sinner only harms himself, just as the deed of one who is obedient is to his own benefit.

Gratitude is humility in the heart and acknowledgement of Allah's blessings, utterance of thanks to the Bestower of those blessings, and physical acts of obedience to Him; it also means not making use of His blessings to disobey Him.



﴿لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٨) ﴿إِنْ تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٩)

النساء: ١٤٨-١٤٩

- 4:148. Allah does not like anyone to speak ill [of others] in public, except the one who has been wronged. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- 4:149. If you do good openly or conceal it or pardon a wrong [done to you], then verily Allah is Pardoning, Omnipotent.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He does not like anyone to speak ill (of others) in public; in other words, He dislikes and hates that, and will punish for it. That includes all bad words that cause offence and upset others, such as insulting, slandering, reviling and so on. All of that is forbidden and is hateful to Allah.

This indicates that He loves good words such as dhikr and kind and gentle words.

«except the one who has been wronged» that is, it is permissible for him to pray against the one who has wronged him, to complain about him and to say bad things back to the one who said it to him, without lying about it, going beyond the level of wrong that was done to him, or overstepping the mark and reviling anyone else. Yet it is better to pardon him and not to respond in kind, as Allah says (ﷻ):

«...but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah...» (ash-Shoorâ 42: 40)

«Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing» because the verse refers to words, whether they be bad, good or permissible. Allah tells us that He is All-Hearing and hears what you say, so beware of speaking of

anything that angers your Lord, lest He punish you for that. This is also encouragement to say good words.

﴿All-Knowing﴾ and He knows your intentions and the motives behind what you say.

Then Allah says: ﴿If you do good openly or conceal it﴾ this includes good in word and deed, open or hidden, obligatory or recommended ﴿or pardon a wrong [done to you]﴾ that is, if you pardon someone who mistreated you physically, financially, or by impugning your honour, and you forgive him, the reward is commensurate with the type of deed. If a person forgives for the sake of Allah, Allah will forgive him; if he shows kindness, Allah will be kind to him. Hence Allah says: ﴿then verily Allah is Pardoning, Omnipotent﴾ that is, He forgives the mistakes of His slaves and their grave sins, so He conceals their errors, then He grants them His perfect forgiveness that stems from His might and power.

From this verse we learn the meanings of the names and attributes of Allah, and that His is the creation and the command (7: 54); this is the implication of His names. Therefore the rulings are connected to His beautiful names, as in this verse.

When He mentioned doing good and pardoning wrongs, He made a connection between that and learning about His names; that is sufficient and there is no need to mention the specific reward.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُوا نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۖ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٥٠-١٥٢)

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- 4:150. Those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers, and want to make a distinction between [belief in] Allah and [belief in] His Messengers, and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to adopt a way in between,
- 4:151. it is they who are indeed disbelievers, and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.
- 4:152. To those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, and make no distinction between [belief in] any of them, He will give their [due] rewards. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
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These are two categories that are clear to everyone: the believer who believes in Allah, all of His Messengers and His Books, and the disbeliever who disbelieves in all of that.

But there is a third category, which is the one who claims to believe in some of the Messengers but not others, and thinks that this way will save him from the punishment of Allah. But this is no more than wishful thinking, because these people want to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers.

The one who believes in Allah in the true sense will believe in all of His Messengers, because that is part of perfect belief. The one who opposes any of His Messengers has in fact opposed Allah and opposed all of His Messengers, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and Messengers, to Jibreel and Meekâl [Meekâ'eel], – then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 98)

Similarly, the one who disbelieves in any Messenger has disbelieved in all of the Messengers, even the Messenger in whom he claims to believe. Hence Allah says: ﴿it is they who are indeed disbelievers﴾. That is lest anyone imagine that their position is a kind of middle way between faith and disbelief.

The reason why they are disbelievers – even in that in which they claim to believe – is that for every proof that led them to believe in the Messengers in whom they do believe, there is the same or equally strong or even stronger evidence for the Prophet in whom they disbelieve, and for every specious argument that they use to undermine the Prophet in whom they disbelieve, there is an equal or stronger argument to undermine the one in whom they do believe.

After establishing the above, there is nothing left except whims and desires, and nothing but mere claims that anyone could counter with a similar claim. As the Qur'an states that these people are indeed disbelievers, it then refers to a punishment that applies to them and to all disbelievers: ﴿and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment﴾. Just as they were too arrogant to believe in Allah, He will humiliate them with a painful punishment and disgrace.

﴿To those who believe in Allah and His Messengers﴾ – this includes belief in all that Allah has told us about Himself and all that the Messengers brought of stories of the past and rulings

﴿and make no distinction between [belief in] any of them﴾ that is, the Messengers; rather they believe in all of them. This is true faith and certainty that is based on proof.

﴿He will give their [due] rewards﴾ that is, as a reward for their faith and what resulted from that of righteous deeds, good words and good attitudes, each according to his situation. Perhaps this is the reason why the reward is described as being theirs

﴿For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He forgives bad deeds and accepts good deeds.



﴿يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ

بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾ فِيمَا نَقُضُهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا الْأَنْبِيَاءُ بَغْيٌ حَقٌّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَبِكَفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَنًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَيُظَاهَرُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا عَلَيْهِمْ طَبِئَتْ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ ﴿سورة النساء: ١٥٣-١٦١﴾

- 4:153. The People of the Book ask you to bring down for them a Book from heaven. Indeed they asked Moosâ for something even greater than that, when they said: Let us see Allah with our own eyes. But a thunderbolt struck them for their transgression. Then they took the calf [for worship] after the clear signs had come to them. Yet We pardoned [even] that, and gave Moosâ clear authority.
- 4:154. And We raised above them the Mount, while making a covenant with them [so as to make them accept it]; and We said: Enter the gate bowing down with humility; and We said to them: Do not break the Sabbath. And We took from them a solemn covenant.
- 4:155. [We punished them] because of their breaking of their covenant, their rejection of the revelations of Allah, their slaying of the Prophets unjustifiably and their saying: Our hearts are impenetrably wrapped [against whatever you say] – Nay, Allah

has sealed up their hearts for their disbelief; little is it they believe –

- 4:156. [And We punished them] because of their disbelief and their uttering a terrible slander against Maryam.
- 4:157. And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah 'Eesâ son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah. But they did not slay him or crucify him; rather [another man] was made to resemble him to them [and that man was crucified]. Those who differ concerning this matter are in doubt concerning it, with no [certain] knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. But they certainly did not slay him.
- 4:158. Rather Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.
- 4:159. There is none among the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them.
- 4:160. Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We forbade to them certain good things that had [previously] been permitted to them; and because of their barring many from the path of Allah,
- 4:161. and because of their taking usury, even though it had been forbidden to them, and because of their devouring people's wealth wrongfully. We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.

This demand from the People of the Book to the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) was due to stubbornness and was an audacious suggestion. They made this request a condition of their believing or otherwise. They asked him to bring down the Qur'an to them all at once, as the Torah and Gospel had come down. This was the utmost wrongdoing and ignorance on their part, because the Messenger (ﷺ) was a human being, a slave under the command of Allah who had no power to do anything. Rather all matters are under the control of Allah

and it is He Who sends and reveals whatever He will to His slaves, as Allah tells us about the Messenger (ﷺ), when mentioning the signs that the polytheists suggested to Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿...Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 93)

The same applies to their making the criterion between truth and falsehood nothing more than the matter of whether the Book is sent down all at once or piecemeal. This is simply an idea of theirs for which there is no proof and no reason, or even any weak argument to support it. Where do we find in the story of the prophethood of any of the Prophets that if a Messenger brings to you a Book that was revealed piecemeal, then you should not believe in him or accept him?

Rather the fact that the Qur'an was revealed piecemeal, according to the circumstances, is one of the indications of its greatness and Allah's care for the one to whom it was sent down, as He says:

﴿Those who disbelieve say: Why was the Qur'an not sent down to him all at once? [It has been revealed] thus so that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have imparted it to you by gradual revelation. Whenever they come to you [O Muhammad] with an argument, We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation.﴾ (al-Furqān 25: 32-33)

When Allah mentioned their invalid objections, He pointed out that there is nothing strange in their attitude, because in the past there has been a suggestion of something even more reprehensible to the Messenger in whom they claimed to believe, when they asked him to let them see Allah with their own eyes, and they took the calf as a god and worshipped it, after they had seen signs with their own eyes that no one else had seen.

They also refused to accept the rulings of their own Book, namely the Torah, until the mountain was raised above their heads and they

were threatened that if they did not believe, it would fall on them. So they accepted that reluctantly, as they had no choice but to believe.

They also refused to enter the gates of the town which they were commanded to enter bowing down in humility and seeking forgiveness, but they went against that in word and deed, and some of them also transgressed the Sabbath, therefore Allah has sent that horrible punishment upon them.

When Allah took from them a solemn covenant, they cast it behind their backs, rejected the revelations of Allah and killed His Messengers unlawfully. Moreover, they said that they killed the Messiah 'Eesâ and crucified him, when in fact they did not kill him or crucify him; rather (another man) was made to resemble him to them, and they killed and crucified that man.

They claimed that their hearts were impenetrably wrapped and could not understand what was said to them, and they barred people from the path of Allah, so they were barred from the truth. They called people to their way of misguidance and transgression, and devouring unlawful earnings and usury, even though Allah had issued a stern prohibition against their doing that. So it comes as no surprise that the people who did these deeds would ask the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) to bring down to them a Book from heaven.

This is the best way to counter arguments that are founded on an invalid basis. If the other person produces a false argument that becomes a source of confusion to him and others and is the cause of them rejecting the truth, we should highlight his evil characteristics and some of his misdeeds that are among the worst of what he did, so that everyone will know that this objection comes from this ignoble man, and that he has previous misdeeds along with this invalid argument of his.

Similarly, any argument they may present to cast aspersions on the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) may be countered by a similar

or stronger argument about the prophethood of those in whom they claim to believe, so as to ward off their evil thereby and suppress their falsehood.

For every argument they present to affirm the prophethood of those in whom they believe, there is a similar or stronger argument to prove and affirm prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ).

Because the aim of listing their evil actions was to establish this argument, Allah did not discuss them in detail here. Rather He referred to them here, and discussed them in detail elsewhere, where it was appropriate to do so.

«There is none among the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death» – it may be that the pronoun in the phrase «before his death» refers to the People of the Book. According to this view, every individual Jew or Christian will believe in 'Eesâ (ﷺ) when death approaches and the truth becomes clear to him, but that faith will be of no benefit because it will be faith by compulsion. This is an implicit threat and warning to them that they should not continue as they are, for they will regret it before death; so how will they be on the day when they are gathered and resurrected?

Or it may be that the pronoun in the phrase «before his death» refers to 'Eesâ (ﷺ). In that case, what is meant is: there is no one among the People of the Book but he will surely believe in the Messiah (ﷺ) before the Messiah's death. That will be when the Hour approaches and its major signs appear. There are numerous *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadiths which speak of his descent at the end of this Ummah; he will kill the Dajjāl and abolish the *jizyah*, and the People of the Book will believe in him along with the believers. On the Day of Resurrection, 'Eesâ (ﷺ) will be a witness against them and will testify concerning their deeds and whether or not they were in accordance with the laws of Allah.

On that day he will only testify to the falseness of everything they believed and did that was contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and

the message of Muhammad (ﷺ). We know that because we know about the perfect justice and sincerity of the Messiah (ﷺ) and that he will testify only to that which is true. That which was brought by Muhammad (ﷺ) is true and everything other than that is misguidance and falsehood.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He forbade to the People of the Book many good things that had previously been permissible for them. This prohibition was a punishment because of their wrongdoing and transgression, their barring people from the path of Allah, their preventing them from following true guidance, and their consuming *ribā* when they had been forbidden to do so. Hence Allah gave them a fitting punishment by withholding from them many of the good things that were originally permitted, even though they are good. In the case of the things that are prohibited to this Ummah, this prohibition is to keep them away from unclean things that are detrimental to their spiritual and worldly interests.



﴿لَكِنَّ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَٰئِكَ
سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٦٢)

- 4:162. But those among them who are firmly grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been sent down to you [O Muhammad], and what was sent down before you; who establish regular prayer and give zakāh, and who believe in Allah and the Last Day – to these We will grant an immense reward.

Having mentioned the bad characteristics of the People of the Book, Allah then mentions those among them who are praiseworthy, as He says: ﴿But those among them who are firmly grounded in

knowledge» that is, those in whose hearts knowledge is deeply entrenched and faith is firmly rooted. That resulted in them having complete faith «in what has been sent down to you [O Muhammad], and what was sent down before you». It also resulted in them doing righteous deeds, namely establishing prayer and giving zakâh, which are the best of deeds, for they include sincerity towards Allah and kindness towards people. They also believed in the Last Day, hence they feared punishment and hoped for the promised reward.

«to these We will grant an immense reward» because they combined knowledge, faith and righteous deeds with belief in the earlier and later Books and Messengers.



﴿إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوشُفَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا﴾ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٦٣-١٦٥)

- 4:163. We have sent revelation to you [O Muhammad], as We sent it to Nooh and the Prophets after him; We sent revelation to Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel, Is-hâq, Ya'qoob and his sons, to 'Eesâ, Ayyoob, Yoonus, Hâroon, and Sulaymân, and to Dâwood We gave the *Zaboor* [Psalms].
- 4:164. And [We sent revelation to] Messengers of whom We have told you, and other Messengers of whom We have not told you. And Allah spoke directly to Moosâ.

4:165. Messengers sent as bearers of glad tidings and as warners, so that humankind would have no excuse before Allah, after the [coming of the] Messengers. For Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.

Here Allah tells us that He revealed to His slave and Messenger (ﷺ) great teachings and laws, and true news of the past, such as He revealed to these earlier Prophets. From this we learn a number of things:

- That Muhammad (ﷺ) is not a new phenomenon among the Messengers. Before him Allah sent many Messengers, so there is no reason to find his being sent strange except ignorance or stubbornness.
- That he received revelation as they did concerning the fundamentals of faith and enjoining of justice, on which all the Messengers are agreed; they confirmed one another and their messages were in harmony.
- That he comes under the same category as those Messengers, so people should think of him as a brother to them, for his call is the same as theirs and their attitudes are in harmony. The source of their message is one and their aims are one. He is not mentioned alongside unknown figures or liars or unjust kings.
- That listing these Messengers is by way of praising and commending them and describing their character, which strengthens the believers' belief in them and love for them, and their desire to emulate them, follow their path and learn more about them. This is a confirmation of the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Peace be upon Nooh among all nations.﴾ (aṣ-Ṣaffāt 37: 79)

﴿Peace be upon Ibrâheem.﴾ (aṣ-Ṣaffāt 37: 109)

﴿Peace be upon Moosâ and Hâroon.﴾ (aṣ-Ṣaffāt 37: 120)

﴿Peace be upon Ilyâs. Thus do We reward those who do good.﴾ (aṣ-Ṣaffāt 37: 130-131)

Every doer of good is praised by people commensurate with his good deeds, and the Messengers – especially those named – attained the highest level of doing good.

As Allah referred to what they have in common (which is that they all received revelation), He then mentions how some of them were singled out for particular blessings. He tells us that He gave Dâwood the Zaboor (Psalms), which is the well-known scripture. Allah gave it especially to Dâwood (ﷺ) because of his virtue and high and honourable status. He spoke directly to Moosâ, with no intermediary, and Moosâ became well known for that among all humankind and is known as “Moosâ to whom the Most Gracious spoke directly.”

Allah tells us that He has told His Messenger (ﷺ) about some of the Messengers, and there are others about whom He has not told him. This indicates that they are many and that Allah sent them with glad tidings, to those who obey Allah and follow them, of happiness in this world and in the hereafter, and with a warning, to those who disobeyed Allah and opposed them, of misfortune in both realms, so that people would have no excuse before Allah, after the coming of the Messengers, and they would not be able to say:

﴿...No bearer of glad tidings and no warner ever came to us. But now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner...﴾
(*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 19)

So people no longer have any excuse before Allah, because He sent the Messengers one after another to explain to them matters of religion and what pleases and displeases their Lord, and the paths that lead to paradise and those that lead to hell. So whoever disbelieves after that has no one to blame but himself.

This is indicative of the perfect might and wisdom of Allah (ﷻ), that He sent the Messengers to them and sent down the Books to them. This also happened by His grace and kindness, because people are in the greatest and most desperate need of the Prophets. So Allah

met this need, to Him be praise and thanks and we ask Him, as He blessed them initially by sending them, to complete His blessing by enabling them to follow their path, for He is most generous and kind.



﴿لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَكُ يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٦٦)

4:166. But Allah bears witness to the truth of what He has sent to you, as He has sent it with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness; and sufficient is Allah as a witness.

Having mentioned that He sent revelation to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) as He sent revelation to his fellow Messengers, Allah tells us here of His testimony to the truth of his mission and the soundness of the message he brought, and He tells us that «He has sent it with His knowledge». It may be that what is meant is that He has sent it down containing His knowledge; in other words, it contains divine knowledge, Islamic rulings and news of the unseen, which is part of the knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) that He has taught to His slaves.

Or it may be that what is meant is that He sent it down knowingly, and this is by way of testifying to it. In other words, He sent down this Qur'an, containing commands and prohibitions, knowing that and knowing the character of the one to whom He sent it down, and that he (the Prophet [ﷺ]) called the people to it. So whoever responds and believes is His ally, and whoever disbelieves and is hostile is His enemy. Allah (ﷻ) will give support to His Prophet (ﷺ), grant him victory after victory, answer his prayers, defeat his enemies and help his supporters.

Is there any testimony greater than this?

It is not possible to doubt this testimony, except by doubting the knowledge, might and wisdom of Allah.

Allah (ﷻ) also tells us of the testimony of the angels in support of what He has sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ), because of their perfect faith and the importance of the thing witnessed. None can testify about important matters but the elites, as Allah (ﷻ) says concerning testimony to His oneness:

﴿Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, as do His angels and people of knowledge; He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 18)

And Allah is sufficient as Witness.

Allah tells us about the message of the Messengers whom He sent (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them), and He tells us about the message of the final one, Muhammad (ﷺ). He testifies in its favour and the angels also testify. This indicates that the matter in question is to be affirmed and it is true and sound, so we must believe in them (the Prophets), accept their message and follow them.

Then Allah warns us against disbelieving in them:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٦٧-١٦٩)

- 4:167. Verily those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah have indeed gone far astray.
- 4:168. Those who disbelieve and do wrong, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them to any path,
- 4:169. except the path that leads to hell, to abide therein forever. And that is easy for Allah.

﴿Verily those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah﴾ that is, they combine their own disbelief with barring others from the path of Allah. This refers to the leaders of disbelief and the proponents of misguidance.

﴿have indeed gone far astray﴾ and what misguidance can be greater than that of one who goes astray himself and leads others astray? He carries the burden of two sins and incurs two losses, and he misses out on guidance twice (his own guidance and that of those whom he leads astray). Hence Allah says:

﴿Those who disbelieve and do wrong﴾ – this wrongdoing is in addition to their disbelief; when wrongdoing (*dhulm*) is mentioned on its own, it includes disbelief.

What is meant by wrongdoing here is the deeds of disbelief and getting carried away in them. These people are far removed from forgiveness and guidance to the straight path. Hence Allah says:

﴿Allah will not forgive them nor guide them to any path, except the path that leads to hell﴾.

It is not possible for them to be forgiven or guided, because they persisted in transgression and increased in disbelief. So a seal has been placed on their hearts and the ways of guidance have been barred to them, because of what they have earned.

﴿...And your Lord is never unjust to His slaves.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 46)

﴿And that is easy for Allah﴾ that is, Allah does not care about them and is not concerned with them, because they are fit for nothing good, and nothing suits them but the way they chose for themselves.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٧)

4:170. O humankind, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so believe, for it is better for you. But if you disbelieve, then surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

Here Allah commands all people to believe in His slave and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), and He mentions the reason why they should believe in him, the benefits of believing in him, and the harm that results from not believing in him. The reason is, as He tells us, that he brought the truth to them; in other words, his coming as a Messenger in and of itself is true, and the teachings that he brought are true.

The wise person would realise that for people to continue wandering blindly in ignorance and disbelief, without receiving any message for a long time, is not in accordance with the wisdom and mercy of Allah. The sending of the Messenger (ﷺ) is in itself part of His great wisdom and mercy, and is aimed at showing them guidance away from misguidance. Simply looking at his message offers definitive proof of the soundness of his claim to prophethood.

The same may be said of looking at the great message he brought and the straight path. His message tells us about matters of the unseen, in the past and in the future, and about Allah and the Last Day; these matters cannot be known except through revelation and the sending of Messengers. Islam enjoins all that is good and righteous, wisdom, justice, kindness, truthfulness, righteousness, upholding of ties and good attitudes, and it prohibits evil, corruption, transgression, injustice, bad attitudes, lying, and disobedience to parents. All of this offers definitive proof that it comes from Allah. The more a person increases in knowledge of the message, the stronger his faith and certainty become. This is the reason for believing.

As for the benefits of faith, Allah says that it is good for us, and good is the opposite of evil. So faith is good for the believers,

physically, mentally and spiritually, in this world and in the hereafter. That is because of what results from faith of interests and benefits, and rewards in this world and in the hereafter. The fruits of faith include divine help, guidance, knowledge, righteous deeds, happiness, joy and paradise with all that it contains of delights. All of that results from faith. By the same token, misery in this world and the hereafter stems from a lack of faith or a deficiency therein.

With regard to the harm of not believing in the Prophet (ﷺ), that is known from the opposite of what results from believing in him. The individual only harms himself, for Allah (ﷻ) has no need of him; the sin of the sinners does not harm him in the slightest. Hence He said: ﴿then surely to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ that is, He created everything and everything belongs to Him and is subject to His control.

﴿and Allah is All-Knowing﴾ – He knows everything
 ﴿Most Wise﴾ in what He creates and commands.

Thus He knows who is deserving of guidance or misguidance, and is wise in His allocation of both.



﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ أَنْتَهُمَا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ

وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٧١)

- 4:171. O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds [of truth] in your religion, and do not say anything about Allah except the truth. The Messiah 'Eesā son of Maryam was [no more than] a Messenger of Allah, and His word, which He bestowed upon

Maryam, and a soul created by Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers. Do not say: Three [trinity]; desist, for that will be better for you. Allah is indeed only one God. Glory be to Him, [far exalted is He] above having a son. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and sufficient is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

Here Allah (ﷻ) forbids the People of the Book to exaggerate in matters of religion, which means overstepping the mark and going beyond the prescribed limit, and doing something which is not prescribed. This is what the Christians did when they exaggerated about 'Eesâ (ﷺ), and raised him from the status of a Prophet and Messenger to the status of divinity which is not befitting for any but Allah.

Just as falling short and being heedless is prohibited, so too is exaggeration. Hence Allah says: ﴿and do not say anything about Allah except the truth﴾. These words imply three things, two of which are prohibitions: it is forbidden to tell lies about Allah and to speak without knowledge about His names, attributes, deeds, religion and Messengers. The third thing is a command, which is to speak the truth in all matters.

Because this principle is universal, and the context here has to do with 'Eesâ (ﷺ), the verse states that one must speak the truth about him, which is contrary to what the Jews and Christians say. Allah says: ﴿The Messiah 'Eesâ son of Maryam was [no more than] a Messenger of Allah﴾ that is, the most that the Messiah (ﷺ) can be, and the highest level of perfection he can reach – which is the highest level any created being can reach – is the level of being a Messenger of Allah, which is the highest status and brings the greatest reward.

﴿and﴾ he is ﴿His word, which He bestowed upon Maryam﴾ that is, a word which Allah spoke and 'Eesâ came into being thereby. He

was not that word **per se**; rather he came into being by means of that word. Describing him as His word is by way of honour and respect (and is not to be taken literally, as the Christians do).

The same applies to the phrase ﴿and a soul created by Him﴾, that is, one of the souls that He created, and He perfected it by bestowing upon it attributes of virtue and perfection. Allah sent Jibreel (ﷺ), who breathed into the womb of Maryam, and she became pregnant, by Allah's leave, with 'Eesā (ﷺ).

Having explained the true nature of 'Eesā (ﷺ), Allah then commands the People of the Book to believe in Him and His Messengers, and He forbids them to describe Allah as "the third of three", which is what the Christians say, and how wrong is what they suggest.

Allah instructs them to desist, and tells them that this will be better for them, because it is the only way to salvation; any other way only leads to doom. Then He declares himself to be above having any partner or child, as He says: ﴿Allah is indeed only one God﴾ that is, He is the only divine being, and it is not appropriate to worship any but Him.

﴿Glory be to Him﴾ – this is a declaration of His Highness and holiness

﴿[far exalted is He] above having a son﴾ because ﴿To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth﴾. Everything belongs to Him and is in need of Him, so it is impossible for Him to have a partner or child among them.

Then Allah tells us that He is the owner of the higher and lower realms, and that He is taking care of their interests in this world and in the hereafter, He is watching over them, and He will requite them accordingly.



﴿لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا﴾ (١٧٣) ﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٧٢-١٧٣)

- 4:172. The Messiah would never disdain to be a slave to Allah, nor would the angels who are close to Him. Whosoever disdains His worship and is arrogant, then surely Allah will gather them all before Him.
- 4:173. Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He [Allah] will give them their reward in full, and will give them yet more out of His bounty. But as for those who are disdainful and arrogant, He will give them a painful punishment, and they will not find for themselves, besides Allah, any protector or helper.

Having mentioned the exaggeration of the Christians about 'Eesâ (ﷺ) and having affirmed that he is His slave and Messenger, Allah tells us here that 'Eesâ would never disdain to worship his Lord. In other words, he would not refuse to worship Him out of resentment. Neither he ﴿nor... the angels who are close to Him﴾ would show such disdain. Thus Allah declares them to be above having such an attitude, so it is more appropriate that they should be above arrogance. Negating a thing affirms its opposite, hence we know that 'Eesâ and the angels who are close to Allah worship their Lord willingly and they love to strive hard in doing so, each according to his circumstances. Hence they deserve that great honour and triumph, for they did not disdain to be slaves and acknowledge His Lordship and divinity.

Rather they realised that their need for that was greater than their need for anything else.

No one should think of 'Eesâ or anyone else being above the position that Allah gave him or think that raising him above the status of being a slave is a kind of ascribing perfection to him; rather it is the essence of imperfection and is something blameworthy and punishable. Hence Allah says: ﴿Whosoever disdains His worship and is arrogant, then surely Allah will gather them all before Him﴾ that is, He will gather all people before Him, those who were disdainful and arrogant, as well as His believing slaves. He will judge between them with justice and requite them decisively.

Then Allah gives more details of His judgement concerning them: ﴿Then, as for those who believe and do righteous deeds﴾ that is, they combine faith as enjoined with righteous deeds, both obligatory and encouraged, with regard to the rights of Allah and the rights of His slaves.

﴿He [Allah] will give them their reward in full﴾ that is, the rewards that He connected to good deeds, each according to his level of faith and action

﴿and will give them yet more out of His bounty﴾ of reward that is not earned by their deeds and which never crossed their minds. This includes everything that there is in paradise of food, drink, marriage, scenery, happiness, joy, comfort and physical pleasure. It also includes all good things, both spiritual and worldly, that are connected to faith and righteous deeds.

﴿But as for those who are disdainful and arrogant﴾ that is, they are too arrogant to worship Allah (﴿﴾

﴿He will give them a painful punishment﴾ which is the wrath and anger of Allah, and the kindled fire that leaps up to the hearts

﴿and they will not find for themselves, besides Allah, any protector or helper﴾ that is, they will not find anyone among humanity to protect them and help them to get what they want, or to help them

and ward off what they fear. Rather they will be abandoned by the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, and He will leave them to their eternal punishment. Whatever Allah (ﷻ) decrees, none can put back His decree and none can change His will.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا﴾ (١٧٤) فَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ، فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمًا﴾ (١٧٥) (سورة النساء: ١٧٤-١٧٥)

- 4:174. O humankind, proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a manifest light.
- 4:175. As for those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them to His mercy and grace, and guide them to Him on a straight path.

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds all people of what He has shown them of definitive proof and manifest light, thus establishing proof against them and making the path clear to them, as He says: ﴿O humankind, proof has come to you from your Lord﴾ that is, definitive proof of the truth and clarification of truth and its opposite. This includes both rational and textual evidence, and the signs in every region of the earth and in people themselves:

﴿We will show them Our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes clear to them that it [the Qur'an] is the truth...﴾
(Fussilat 41: 53)

The words ﴿from your Lord﴾ indicate how great and honourable this proof is, as it comes from your Lord, Who is guiding you in your religious and worldly affairs. Part of His guidance for which He should be praised and thanked, is that He has sent you proof in order to guide you thereby to the straight path, so that you might reach paradise.

«and We have sent down to you a manifest light», which is this Holy Qur'an, which includes all branches of knowledge attained by the earlier and later generations; true and beneficial information; prescription of everything that is fair, sublime and good; and prohibition of everything that is wrong and evil. People will remain in darkness unless they seek its light, and they will remain in deep misery unless they are guided by it.

But the people are divided – according to their belief in the Qur'an and the extent to which they benefit from it – into two categories:

«As for those who believe in Allah» that is, they acknowledge His existence, ascribe all attributes of perfection to Him, and believe that He is above all shortcomings and faults

«and hold fast to Him» that is, they turn to Allah, rely upon Him, acknowledge their own lack of power and strength, and seek the help of their Lord

«He will admit them to His mercy and grace» that is, He will shower them with a special kind of mercy, guide them to that which is good, reward them abundantly and ward off from them calamities and harm.

«and guide them to Him on a straight path» that is, He will enable them to acquire knowledge and do good deeds, and to recognise the truth and act upon it.

In other words, whoever does not believe in Allah, hold fast to Him and adhere to His Book, He will deprive them of His mercy and grace, and He will leave them to their own devices. Hence they will not be guided; rather they will go far astray, as a punishment to them for not believing. Therefore all they will gain is doom and loss. We ask Allah (ﷻ) to keep us safe and sound, and to forgive us.



﴿يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ إِنِ امْرُؤٌ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ فَإِن كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الشُّلُّانُ

مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلَّذَكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
 أَنْ تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٧٦)

- 4:176. They ask you for a ruling. Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning those who die leaving neither ascendants nor descendants. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child [or surviving parent], she will have half of the estate. If [the deceased] is a woman who left no child [or surviving parent], her brother will have the [entire] estate. If there are two sisters [or more], they will have two-thirds of the estate [between them]. If there are brothers and sisters, [they will share the estate], each male having a portion equal to that of two females. Allah explains things to you lest you go astray. And Allah has knowledge of all things

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the people asked His Messenger (ﷺ) about cases in which a person dies, leaving neither ascendants nor descendants, as He says «Say: Allah gives you a ruling concerning those who die leaving neither ascendants nor descendants». This refers to one who dies leaving behind no child of his own, and no grandchild, father or grandfather. Hence Allah says: «If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child» that is, neither male nor female, and neither a child of his own nor a grandchild.

He also leaves behind no father, based on the fact that the share of inheritance is to be given to his siblings; according to scholarly consensus, siblings do not inherit if there is a father. But if a person dies and he leaves behind no son or father, but he leaves «a sister», that is, a full sister or a half-sister through the father – not through the mother; the ruling on the latter case has been mentioned above.

«she will have half of the estate» that is, half of what her brother left behind of cash, real estate, furniture and so on, after debts have been settled and bequests have been carried out, as mentioned above.

﴿If [the deceased] is a woman who left no child [or surviving parent], her brother will have the [entire] estate﴾ that is, her full brother or her half-brother through the father will inherit from her. There is no mention of how much he will take, because he is 'âṣib, that is, a male relative on the father's side, so he will take all of her wealth, if there is no one else who has an allocated share, or some other male relative to share it with him, or what is left after giving the allocated shares.

﴿If there are two sisters [or more], they will have two-thirds of the estate [between them]. If there are brothers and sisters﴾ that is, if there are both males and females, siblings from different mothers ﴿[they will share the estate], each male having a portion equal to that of two females﴾ thus the allocated share of the females is waived and the estate is divided among the siblings.

﴿Allah explains things to you lest you go astray﴾ that is, He explains to you in detail the rulings that you need to know, as a favour and kindness on His part, so that you will be guided by His explanation and will act upon His rulings, lest you go astray from the straight path because of your ignorance and lack of knowledge.

﴿And Allah has knowledge of all things﴾ that is, He has knowledge of the unseen and the seen, the past and the future; He knows that you need explanations and to learn, so He teaches you from His knowledge that which will benefit you always, in all times and places.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat an-Nisâ'.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



05.

Soorat al-Mâ'idah

(Ma'dani)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ۖ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتَنَّى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١)

5:1. O you who believe, fulfil your covenants. Lawful to you [for food] are all livestock animals, with the exception of that which is hereby announced to you. But you are forbidden to kill game while you are in the state of iḥrām [for Hajj or 'umrah]. Verily Allah ordains what He wills.

This is a command from Allah (ﷻ) to His believing slaves, telling them what faith requires of fulfilling covenants, which is that one should adhere to them properly and completely, and not break them or fall short in fulfilling them.

That includes all covenants between the individual and his Lord, which require one to be a true slave to Him and to do one's duty

properly, without falling short therein. It also includes the covenant between the individual and the Messenger (ﷺ), and the duty to obey him and follow him; the covenant between the individual and his parents and relatives, which requires him to honour them and uphold ties with them, and not to sever those ties; the covenant between the individual and his companions, which requires him to uphold the ties of companionship in times of wealth and of poverty, in times of ease and of hardship; the covenant between the individual and other people, in transactions such as buying and selling, renting, and so on, and covenants that involve giving something for free, such as gifts and the like. It also requires the individual to fulfil the rights of the Muslims which Allah has established among them when He said:

«The believers are but brothers...» (*al-Hujurât* 49: 10)

So they should support one another in adhering to the truth, co-operate in doing so, establish loving ties of friendship among the Muslims, and not sever ties with one another.

This issue includes both the fundamentals of Islam and the minor issues; all of them are part of the covenants which Allah enjoins us to fulfil.

Then Allah reminds His slaves of His blessings to them: «Lawful to you [for food]» as a mercy to you «are all livestock animals» – the word *an'âm* (translated here as «livestock animals») includes camels, cattle and sheep. It may also include wild animals such as gazelles, onagers (wild asses) and other animals that are hunted.

Some of the Ṣaḥābah quoted this verse as evidence for it being permissible to eat the foetus that dies in the womb after its mother is slaughtered in the prescribed manner.

«with the exception of that which is hereby announced to you» that is, the prohibition thereof is announced to you in the subsequent verse: «Forbidden to you [for food] are: the meat of animals found

dead, blood, the flesh of swine... ﴿5: 3﴾ the things mentioned in that verse, even if they are livestock animals, are prohibited.

Because the permissibility of livestock animals is general and is applicable in all circumstances and at all times, an exception is made in the case of hunting whilst in iḥrām, as Allah says:

﴿But you are forbidden to kill game while you are in the state of iḥrām [for Hajj or 'umrah]﴾ that is, livestock animals are permissible to you in all circumstances, except when you are in a state in which hunting is not permissible, which is when you are in iḥrām. At that time you should not transgress the limit by killing such animals when you are in the state of iḥrām and within the limits of the Ḥaram (sanctuary) zone. Doing so is not permissible for you if the animal is game, such as gazelles and the like. "Game" refers to wild animals that may be eaten.

﴿Verily Allah ordains what He wills﴾ that is, whatever Allah (ﷻ) wills, He ordains it in accordance with His wisdom, just as He instructed you to fulfil your covenants in order to attain your best interests and to ward off harm from you.

He has permitted livestock animals to you out of mercy and compassion towards you, and He has prohibited to you exceptions from that, such as meat found dead and the like, so as to protect you from harm, and He has prohibited hunting whilst in iḥrām, out of respect for the state of iḥrām.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعِيرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَنْ صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

- 5:2. O you who believe, do not violate the sanctity of the rites of Allah, or of the sacred month, or of the animals brought for sacrifice, or the garlands that mark out such animals, or those who are travelling to the Sacred House, seeking bounty from their Lord and to please Him. But when you come out of iḥrām [following Hajj or 'umrah], then you may hunt. Do not let your hatred of those who prevented you from reaching the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgress. Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and transgression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe, do not violate the sanctity of the rites of Allah﴾ that is, do not transgress the sacred limits that He has instructed you to respect or do that which He has told you not to do. This prohibition includes both doing it and believing that it is permissible to do it. That includes the prohibition on doing an evil action and believing it is permissible.

It also includes the prohibition on doing the things that are forbidden when in the state of iḥrām and when in the Ḥaram (sanctuary) zone.

﴿or of the sacred month﴾ that is, do not violate the sanctity thereof by fighting during those months, or committing other kinds of wrongdoing, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve, as ordained by Allah on the day He created the heavens and the earth, of which four are sacred. This is the correct calculation. So do not wrong yourselves during them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 36)

The majority of scholars are of the view that the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months was abrogated by the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Then when the sacred months are over, slay the polytheists²¹ wherever you find them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 5)

²¹ This refers only to the polytheists who had broken their treaty with the Muslims and supported their enemies against them.

And there are other texts which speak of slaying the disbelievers in general terms, and which warn against refraining from fighting them in general terms. The Prophet (ﷺ) fought the people of Taif during Dhul-Qa'dah, which was one of the sacred months.

Others said: The prohibition on fighting during the sacred months was not abrogated by this verse or others, because the prohibition was mentioned in specific terms, and the permissibility was mentioned in general terms, and what is mentioned in general terms is to be understood in light of what is mentioned in specific terms.

Some of them explained the matter by saying that it is not permissible to initiate fighting during the sacred months, but in the case of continuing and completing the fight, if it began during other months, that is permissible.

They interpreted the Prophet's fighting the people of Taif on that basis, because that fight started at Hunayn during Shawwāl.

In all cases, this has to do with fighting that is not for the purpose of defence. In the case of defensive fighting, if the disbelievers initiated the fight with the Muslims, then it is permissible for the Muslims to fight in order to defend themselves during the sacred months or otherwise, according to scholarly consensus.

﴿or of the animals brought for sacrifice, or the garlands that mark out such animals﴾ that is, do not violate the sanctity of the sacrificial animals that have been brought to the House of Allah during Hajj or 'umrah or otherwise. Do not prevent them from reaching their place of sacrifice, do not seize them by theft or otherwise, and do not mistreat them or make them carry burdens greater than they can bear, lest they die before reaching their place of sacrifice. Rather you should respect them and respect the people who brought them.

﴿or the garlands that mark out such animals﴾. This refers to a special type of sacrificial animal, which is the one for which strings have been twisted or tied into knots, then placed on its neck as a

manifestation of the rituals of Allah, and to encourage people to follow this example and to teach them the Sunnah; this is also done so that it will be known that this is a sacrificial animal and should be respected as such. Hence putting a garland on the sacrificial animal is Sunnah.

﴿or those who are travelling to the Sacred House﴾ that is, heading towards it

﴿seeking bounty from their Lord and to please Him﴾. This refers to those who are heading towards the Sacred House, seeking Allah's bounty by means of trade and permissible earnings, or to attain the pleasure of Allah by means of performing Hajj or 'umrah, circumambulating the House, praying and doing other acts of worship. Do not mistreat them or humiliate them; rather you should honour them and respect those who are coming to visit the House of their Lord.

This carries an implicit instruction to make safe the roads that lead to the House of Allah, and to make those who are coming to it feel safe and at ease, not fearing for their lives or other kinds of harm, or fearing that their wealth may be subjected to unjust taxes, plunder and the like.

This verse excludes those who are mentioned in another verse, namely:

﴿O you who believe, truly the polytheists are impure, so do not let them come near the Sacred Mosque after this [final] year of theirs...﴾

(at-Tawbah 9: 28)

– the polytheists should no longer be allowed to enter the H̥aram zone.

The restriction in this verse, which prohibits disturbing those who are headed to the Kaaba, seeking bounty from their Lord and to please Him, indicates that if someone is travelling there for the purpose of committing sin in that place, then part of respecting the sanctuary is to prevent anyone with such intentions from transgressing the sanctity of the House of Allah, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and any who intend to profane it by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty.﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 25)

Because He had forbidden them to hunt whilst in the state of iḥrām, Allah then says: ﴿But when you come out of iḥrām [following Hajj or 'umrah], then you may hunt﴾ that is, when you exit iḥrām after completing Hajj or 'umrah, and you go out of the Ḥaram zone, it becomes permissible for you to hunt, and the prohibition no longer applies. This command after the prohibition serves to restore things to the way they were before.

﴿Do not let your hatred of those who prevented you from reaching the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgress﴾ that is, do not let your hatred and enmity towards some people, and their previous aggression against you when they prevented you from reaching the mosque, cause you to transgress against them, seeking revenge. One must adhere to the command of Allah and follow the path of justice, even when one has been wronged or mistreated or subjected to aggression. It is not permissible to tell lies about the one who lied about him, or to betray the one who betrayed him.

﴿Help one another in righteousness and piety﴾ that is, help one another to be righteous. The word *birr* (translated here as ﴿righteousness﴾) includes everything that Allah loves and that pleases Him of actions both outward and inward, having to do with the rights of Allah and the rights of other people.

In this context, the word *taqwā* (translated here as ﴿piety﴾) includes refraining from everything that Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) hate, of actions both outward and inward.

Thus it is commanded to do every deed that is regarded as good, and it is commanded to refrain from every deed that is regarded as evil. The individual is enjoined to do that himself and to cooperate with his fellow believers in saying and doing everything that will motivate and encourage people to do that.

﴿but do not help one another in sin﴾ that is, overstepping the mark by doing acts of disobedience that incur a burden of sin and may be a cause of unease and embarrassment

﴿and transgression﴾ that is, transgressing against people with regard to their blood, wealth and honour. One must refrain from acts of sin and wrongdoing, and help others to refrain also.

﴿Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment﴾ towards those who disobey Him and transgress His sacred limits. So respect the limits, lest punishment befall you in this world and the hereafter.



﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ
وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ
وَأَنْ تَسْقُطُوا بِهَا لِأَزْلَمِ ذَلِكُمْ فَسَقٌ﴾ ... ﴿٣﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣)

- 5:3. Forbidden to you [for food] are: the meat of animals found dead, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which [a name] other than that of Allah has been invoked [at the time of slaughter]; that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which has been [partly] eaten by a wild animal – unless you are able to slaughter it [in the prescribed manner, before it dies]; and that which is sacrificed on stone [altars]. [Also forbidden] is making decisions by means of divining arrows. All of that is an abomination. ...

This is what was referred to in the first verse, in which Allah said: ﴿with the exception of that which is hereby announced to you﴾. It should be understood that Allah only prohibited what He prohibited in order to protect His slaves from the harm that is present in that which is prohibited, and which He may or may not explain to His slaves.

Here Allah tells us that He has prohibited ﴿the meat of animals found dead﴾. What is meant by the meat of animals found dead is meat from an animal that lost its life without being slaughtered in the prescribed manner. It is prohibited because it is harmful, as its blood is still retained inside its body and its flesh is harmful to the one who eats it. In such cases the animal often dies because of some disease that killed it, so it would be harmful to the one who eats it. An exception to this prohibition is made in the case of locusts and fish found dead, which are permissible.

﴿blood﴾ that is, blood that has been shed or poured forth, as is stated in another verse.

﴿the flesh of swine﴾ that includes all parts of the pig. Allah mentioned swine out of all other impure wild animals, because some of the People of the Book, namely the Christians, claim that Allah permitted it to them. So what is meant here is: do not be deceived by them, because it is prohibited and is included among those things which are impure.

﴿and that on which [a name] other than that of Allah has been invoked [at the time of slaughter]﴾ that is, the name of something other than Allah was mentioned over it, such as the names of idols, the awliyâ' ("saints"), stars and other created things. Just as invoking the name of Allah over it at the time of slaughter makes it good and permissible, invoking the name of anything other than Him over it makes it impure, because it is associating something else with Allah (ﷻ).

﴿that which has been killed by strangling﴾, whether that was done by hand or with a rope, or putting its head into something tight from which it could not escape until it died.

﴿or by a violent blow﴾ that is, it died because of being hit with a stick or a rock or a piece of wood, or something fell on it, whether that was done intentionally or otherwise.

﴿or by a headlong fall﴾ that is, it fell from a height such as a mountain, wall or roof and the like, and died as a result.

﴿or by being gored to death﴾ – this refers to an animal that was gored by another and died.

﴿that which has been [partly] eaten by a wild animal﴾ such as a wolf, lion, tiger or birds of prey. If it dies as a result of being eaten by a wild animal, it is not permissible.

The phrase ﴿unless you are able to slaughter it [in the prescribed manner, before it dies]﴾ refers to all of these cases, namely strangling, a violent blow, a headlong fall, being gored and being eaten by a wild animal; if it is slaughtered in the prescribed manner while it is still alive and its survival is feasible, so that it is possible to slaughter it in the prescribed manner. Hence the fuqahā' said: If the wild animal or whatever took out its stomach or cut its throat, even if it is still alive, it is regarded as having been found dead, because there is no benefit in slaughtering it in the prescribed manner. (Others only pay attention to the issue of whether it is still alive; if it is slaughtered in the prescribed manner when it is still alive then it becomes permissible, even if its stomach has been taken out, and this is the apparent meaning of the verse.)

﴿[Also forbidden] is making decisions by means of divining arrows﴾ This refers to three arrows that were used during the jāhilyah. Written on one of them was the word "Do [it]"; on the second was written "Do not do [it]", and nothing was written on the third.

If one of them was thinking of travelling or getting married and so on, he would mix those three arrows that were equal in size, then he would take out one of them. If he took out the one on which was written "Do [it]", he would go ahead with his plans. If he took out the one on which was written "Do not do [it]", he would not go ahead with his plans. If he took out the one on which nothing was written, he would repeat the procedure until he took out one of the other two

arrows, then he would act upon it. Allah forbade them to do this and similar things, and he gave them an alternative in the form of *istikhârah* by means of which they could ask their Lord for guidance in all decisions.

﴿All of that is an abomination﴾ this refers to all the prohibited things mentioned above, which Allah has prohibited in order to protect His slaves. They are ﴿an abomination﴾ that is, disobedience to Him and obedience to the Shayṭān.

Then He reminds His slaves of His favours:



﴿... الْيَوْمَ يَبَسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخِصَّةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣)

- 5:3. ... This day have those who disbelieve given up all hope of you deviating from your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by [severe] hunger [to eat that which is forbidden], with no intention of sinning, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

The day referred to here is the Day of 'Arafah, when Allah perfected His religion, and granted victory to His slave and Messenger (ﷺ), and the polytheists were defeated completely after having been very keen to turn the believers away from their religion and had been hoping to achieve that.

When they saw the victory and triumph of Islam, they despaired utterly of the believers ever returning to their (the polytheists')

religion, and they began to fear them. Hence in the year in which the Prophet (ﷺ) performed Hajj (10 AH), which was his Farewell Pilgrimage, no polytheist performed Hajj and no one circumambulated the Kaaba naked.

Hence Allah said: ﴿So do not fear them, but fear Me﴾ that is, do not be afraid of the polytheists; rather fear Allah, Who has granted you victory over them and defeated them, and caused their plot to backfire.

﴿This day have I perfected your religion for you﴾ by completing the victory and perfecting all laws and teachings that have to do with both outward and inward matters, fundamentals and minor issues. Hence the Qur'an and Sunnah are completely sufficient with regard to the rulings of Islam, both fundamental and minor issues.

Anyone who tries to be smart by claiming that the people have no choice, in learning their beliefs and rulings, but to refer to other branches of knowledge apart from knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, such as "Islamic philosophy" (*'ilm al-kalâm*), is ignorant and his call is false, because it is an implicit claim that Islam cannot be complete without that which he is promoting. This is one of the worst kinds of wrongdoing and is an accusation of ignorance against Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿completed My blessing upon you﴾, both visible and invisible ﴿and have chosen for you Islam as your religion﴾ that is, I have chosen it and selected it for you as your religion, and am pleased with it for you. Therefore you should adhere to it out of gratitude to your Lord, and praise the One Who has blessed you with the best, noblest and most perfect of religions.

﴿But if any is forced﴾ that is, if he resorts out of necessity to eating any of the prohibited things mentioned above, at the beginning of the verse,
 ﴿by [severe] hunger﴾ that is, starvation

﴿with no intention of sinning﴾ that is, without any inclination towards sin, because he would not eat it unless he had no other option, and he does not eat more than is sufficient

﴿Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ as He has made it permissible for him to eat in this situation, and He has shown mercy by allowing him to eat enough to keep him going, without that affecting his religious commitment.



﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّينَ
تُعَلِّمُوهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَانْفَعُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٤)

- 5:4. They ask you [O Muhammad] what is lawful to them [as food].
Say: Lawful to you are [all] good things, as well as that which you have taught your hunting animals to catch, training them as Allah has taught you. Eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of Allah over it [when releasing the hunting animal].
And fear Allah; for Allah is swift in reckoning.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ): ﴿They ask you [O Muhammad] what is lawful to them﴾ of food.

﴿Say: Lawful to you are [all] good things﴾ – this refers to everything that is beneficial or tastes good, without causing physical or mental harm. That includes all kinds of grains and fruits that grow in towns and in the wilderness, as well as all sea animals and all land animals, apart from the exceptions made by the Lawgiver, such as carnivorous animals and impure things.

Hence the verse indicates that impure things are prohibited, as is stated clearly elsewhere:

﴿...he makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful...﴾
(*al-A'raf* 7: 157)

﴿as well as that which you have taught your hunting animals to catch﴾ that is, He has permitted to you that which you have trained your hunting animals to catch.

This verse indicates several things:

- 1- Allah's kindness and mercy to His slaves, as He has given them many ways of obtaining permissible food, and He has permitted to them what they do not slaughter in the prescribed manner of that which is caught by their hunting animals. What is meant by hunting animals is dogs, falcons and the like, which hunt with fangs or talons.
- 2- Allah stipulated that these hunting animals should be taught or trained, in the manner that is customarily regarded as training, so that the animal will run when released and stop when told to stop, and when it catches the prey it will not eat it. Hence He says: ﴿training them as Allah has taught you. Eat what they catch for you﴾ that is, what they catch of prey for you. Whatever the hunting animal eats, it is not known whether he caught it for his master for himself; he may have caught it for himself.
- 3- It is stipulated that the dog or bird should cause a wound to the prey, because the word used here is *jawâriḥ* (translated as ﴿hunting animals﴾; the root meaning of this word means to wound). Moreover, the previous verse mentions the prohibition on eating animals that have been strangled. Therefore if the dog or other hunting animal were to strangle the prey or kill it by its weight, it would not be permissible. (This is on the basis that the word *jawâriḥ* refers to hunting animals that wound the prey with fangs or talons. However the well-known view is that the word *jawâriḥ* has the meaning of "collectors" and refers to those who collect the prey or catch up with it, in which case this condition is not applicable. And Allah knows best.)

- 4- It is permissible to keep a hunting dog, as is mentioned in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadith, even though keeping dogs is prohibited, because what is implied by the permissibility of hunting with the dog and training it is that it is permissible to keep it.
- 5- The prey that is caught by the dog's mouth is pure (*tāhir*), because Allah permitted it and did not state that it must be washed, which indicates that it is pure.
- 6- This points to the virtue of teaching and training, because prey caught by the hunting animal that has knowledge by virtue of being trained is permissible, whereas that caught by one which is ignorant and untrained is not permissible.
- 7- Spending time in training the dog or bird, or other hunting animal, is not blameworthy and does not come under the heading of idle pursuits; rather it is something that serves the purpose, because it is a means of making the animal's prey permissible and benefiting from it.
- 8- This verse offers evidence for those who regard it as permissible to sell hunting dogs, because they cannot be acquired otherwise.
- 9- It is stipulated to invoke the name of Allah when releasing the hunting animal; if the hunter deliberately omits to invoke the name of Allah, whatever is killed by the hunting animal is not permissible.
- 10- It is permissible to eat what the hunting animal catches, whether the hunting animal kills it or not. If the owner catches up with it and the prey is still alive, it is not permissible to eat it unless it is slaughtered in the prescribed manner.

Then Allah (ﷻ) urges us to fear Him, and He warns us about the coming of the reckoning on the Day of Resurrection, and that this is close at hand, as He says: ﴿And fear Allah; for Allah is swift in reckoning﴾.



﴿الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ
وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا
ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥)

- 5:5. This day all good things are made lawful to you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful to you and your food is lawful to them. [Lawful to you in marriage] are chaste women who are believers and chaste women among those who were given the scripture before you, provided that you give them their dowries, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication or illicit relationships. Whoever denies the faith, his deeds will come to nothing and in the hereafter he will be among the losers.

Here Allah repeats the permissibility of good things in order to highlight His favour and call His slaves to give thanks to Him and remember Him a great deal, for He has permitted to them all good things that will meet their needs and will be beneficial to them.

﴿The food of the People of the Book is lawful to you﴾ that is, meat slaughtered by the Jews and Christians is permissible for you – O Muslims – but not that slaughtered by other disbelievers; their meat is not permissible for the Muslims. That is because the People of the Book claim to follow the Prophets and scriptures, and all the Messengers were agreed that the meat of animals slaughtered for anyone other than Allah is prohibited, because that is associating others with Him (shirk). It is part of the teachings of the Jews and the Christians that the meat of animals slaughtered for anyone other than Allah is prohibited, hence their meat is lawful whilst that slaughtered by others is not.

The evidence that what is meant by the food here is the meat is the fact that with regard to food other than meat, such as grains and fruits, there is nothing special about the People of the Book in this regard; rather these things are permissible even if it is the food of people who follow other religions. Moreover, the food is described as being theirs (﴿the food of the People of the Book﴾), which refers to meat slaughtered by them, not food they own, because the issue of legitimate ownership applies equally to both People of the Book and Muslims.²²

﴿and your food﴾ O Muslims ﴿is lawful to them﴾ that is, it is permissible for you to give it to them.

﴿[Lawful to you in marriage] are chaste women﴾ that is, women who are free (not slaves) and chaste ﴿who are believers﴾ ﴿and chaste women﴾ who are free (not slaves) ﴿among those who were given the scripture before you﴾ that is, Jews and Christians.

This is an exception from what is mentioned elsewhere:

﴿Do not marry the polytheist women until they believe...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 221)

What this verse means is that it is not permissible for free men to marry believing female slaves, and that is the case.

With regard to unchaste women who do not refrain from illicit sex, it is not permissible to marry them, whether they are Muslims or from the People of the Book, until they repent, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿A man who fornicates may only marry a woman who fornicates or who is a polytheist...﴾ (*an-Noor* 24: 3)

﴿provided that you give them their dowries﴾ this indicates that it is made permissible to marry them, provided that you give them their dowries. If anyone intends not to give the woman her dowry, then she is not permissible for him. Allah has enjoined giving her the dowry

²² That is because food acquired by unlawful means is haram regardless of the religious affiliation of the person in whose possession it is.

if she is mature and fit to receive it, otherwise the husband should give it to her guardian.

Attributing the dowry to them (﴿their dowries﴾) indicates that the woman owns all of her dowry; it is hers and no one is entitled to anything of it, unless she willingly gives it to her husband, guardian or anyone else.

﴿taking them in honest wedlock﴾ that is, your intention – O husbands – is to keep your wives chaste by keeping yourselves chaste, by refraining from illicit relationships with any other women.

﴿not in fornication﴾ that is, committing *zinā* with anyone (numerous partners)

﴿or illicit relationships﴾ that is, *zinā* with a lover (one partner). During the *jāhiliyah*, some people would commit *zinā* with anyone, whereas others would do so with a particular lover. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that this is contrary to chastity and that one of the conditions of marriage is that the man should be chaste and refrain from *zinā*.

﴿Whoever denies the faith﴾ that is, whoever disbelieves in Allah (ﷻ) and what faith requires of also believing in His Books and His Messengers, or any of the teachings of Islam, his deeds will come to nothing, if he dies in a state of disbelief, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...And if any of you turn back from their faith and die as disbelievers, their deeds will come to nothing in this world and in the hereafter...﴾

(*al-Baqarah* 2: 217)

﴿and in the hereafter he will be among the losers﴾ that is, he will be among those who lose their souls, their wealth and their families on the Day of Resurrection and incur eternal misery.



يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ
إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا

فَاطْهَرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَنَسْتُمُ
النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
مِّنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
وَلِيُنِزِلَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦)

- 5:6. O you who believe, when you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands [and arms] to the elbows; wipe over your heads [with wet hands]; and [wash] your feet to the ankles. If you are in a state of major impurity [janâbah], then purify yourselves [ghusl]. If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [tayammum]. Allah does not wish to impose any hardship on you, but to purify you, and complete His favour to you, so that you may give thanks.

This verse includes many rulings, of which we will mention those that Allah enables us to:

- 1- What is mentioned here, and complying with it and acting upon it, is among the requirements of faith without which faith is not complete, because the verse begins with the words ﴿O you who believe...﴾. What is meant is: O you who believe, do what your faith requires, and what has been prescribed for you.
- 2- The command to establish prayer, because Allah says: ﴿when you prepare for prayer﴾.
- 3- The command to form the intention to pray, because Allah says: ﴿when you prepare for prayer﴾, that is, with the aim and intention of praying.
- 4- Being in a state of purification is stipulated in order for the prayer to be valid, because Allah enjoins it when preparing to pray, and the basic meaning of enjoining is that something is obligatory.

- 5- Purification does not become obligatory when the time for prayer begins; rather it becomes obligatory when one wants to pray.
- 6- In the case of everything that may be called prayer – whether it is obligatory or supererogatory, a communal obligation, or the funeral prayer – it is stipulated that one should be in a state of purity. This even applies to prostration on its own, according to many scholars, such as the prostration when reading Qur'an and the prostration of gratitude.
- 7- The command to wash the face, from the regular hairline to the jawline and chin lengthwise, and from ear to ear.
That includes rinsing the mouth and nose, as stated in the Sunnah, as well as hair on the face; if the facial hair is light, the water must reach the skin, but if it is thick, it is sufficient to wet the surface of the hair.
- 8- The command to wash the hands (and arms), up to the elbow. According to the majority of commentators, *ilā* (the word translated here as «up to»)) means “with”, because what is required cannot be completed except by washing the entire elbow.
- 9- The command to wipe the head.
- 10- It is obligatory to wipe the entire head (as is indicated by the grammatical structure of the original Arabic text).
- 11- It is sufficient to wipe the head in any manner, with one or both hands, or with a cloth or a piece of wood and the like, because Allah mentioned wiping in general terms and did not specify what is to be used to do it, which indicates that any manner of doing it is acceptable.
- 12- What is required is to wipe the head. If someone were to wash his head, without wiping the hand over the head, that would not be acceptable, because it would not be doing what Allah had enjoined.

- 13- The command to wash the feet up to the ankles; something similar may be said concerning this as was said concerning the arms.
- 14- This is a refutation of the Râfiḍis, because the majority of scholars read the word *arjulakum* (﴿your feet﴾) in the accusative (that is, the object of the verb ﴿wash﴾); it is not permissible to wipe them so long as they are uncovered.
- 15- This verse may be taken as an indication that it is permissible to wipe over the *khuffayn* (leather slippers), according to a variant recitation (*arjulikum*), which would connect it to the act of wiping over the head. In that case the feet may be wiped over if they are covered with the *khuffayn*. Each recitation may have its own meaning: according to the first recitation (*arjulakum*), the feet are to be washed if they are uncovered; according to the second recitation (*arjulikum*), the feet are to be wiped over if they are covered with the *khuffayn*.
- 16- It is enjoined to follow a particular order when doing wuḍoo', because Allah mentions the actions of wuḍoo' in a particular order, and because He mentioned something that is to be wiped – namely the head – in between two things that are to be washed, and there would be no point in doing so except to emphasise a particular order.
- 17- That particular order has to do with the four main parts of the body mentioned in this verse. With regard to the order of rinsing the mouth and nose and washing the face, or washing the right and left in the case of the arms and feet, doing these things in a particular order is not obligatory. Rather it is mustaḥabb to rinse the mouth and nose before washing the face, to start with the right before the left when washing the arms and feet, and to wipe the head before the ears.
- 18- The command to renew wuḍoo' for each prayer, so as to do it exactly as enjoined.

- 19- The command to wash oneself in the case of *janâbah* (impurity following sexual activity).
- 20- It is obligatory to ensure that water reaches all parts of the body when doing *ghusl*, because Allah mentions purifying of the body, without specifying some particular parts to the exclusion of others.
- 21- The command to wash the hair thoroughly when purifying oneself from *janâbah*.
- 22- Purification from minor impurity may be included in purification from major impurity; if both are applicable, it is sufficient to intend to form the intention of purification, then wash the entire body, because Allah only said to purify oneself, and He did not say that one should repeat *wuḍoo'*.
- 23- The word *junub* (one who is in a state of *janâbah*) is applicable to anyone who has emitted *maniy*, whether awake or asleep, or who has had intercourse, whether he ejaculated or not.
- 24- The one who remembers having a wet dream but does not find any wetness does not have to do *ghusl*, because in that case he is not *junub*.
- 25- A reminder of Allah's blessing to His slaves, as He prescribed *tayammum* for them.
- 26- One of the reasons for *tayammum* being permissible is sickness which will be worsened by washing with water; in that case it is permissible to do *tayammum*.
- 27- One of the reasons for *tayammum* being permissible is travelling and having relieved oneself by urinating or defecating, if no water is available. Thus sickness makes *tayammum* permissible even if water is available, because of the harm that would result from using it. The other reasons make *tayammum* permissible when there is no water available, even if one is not travelling.
- 28- Emissions from the front and back passages, of urine and stools respectively, invalidate *wuḍoo'*

- 29- This verse is quoted as evidence by those who say that wuḍoo' is only invalidated by these two things (relieving oneself or touching women), not by touching the private part and so on.
- 30- It is mustahabb to use euphemisms in order to avoid using foul language, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿or have relieved yourselves﴾.
- 31- Touching a woman with desire and pleasure invalidates wuḍoo'.
- 32- It is stipulated that no water be available in order for tayammum to be valid.
- 33- When water becomes available, even if that is whilst praying, tayammum becomes invalid, because Allah only permitted it when water is not available.
- 34- If the time for prayer begins and a person does not have water with him, he must look for it where he is staying, and nearby, because it cannot be said that he could not find water if he did not look for it.
- 35- If a person finds water but it is not sufficient for him to purify himself completely, then he must use it up, then do tayammum after that.
- 36- If water is altered by halal, pure substances, using it takes precedence over tayammum, because water that has been changed is still water, so it is included in the words ﴿and cannot find water﴾.
- 37- It is essential to form the intention of tayammum, as may be understood from the original Arabic text, because the Arabic word tayammum means to aim and intend to do something.
- 38- Anything that accumulates on the face of the earth is valid for tayammum, such as dust and the like. Based on that, the words ﴿and wipe your faces and hands with it﴾ either refer to what is usually the case, as one will usually have dust available with which one may wipe, and it will stick to the face and hands, or

this is indicating the better way, and that if it is possible to use earth in which there is dust, this is preferable.

- 39- It is not valid to do tayammum with impure earth, because it is not pure and clean; rather it is impure.
- 40- What is to be wiped in the case of tayammum is the face and hands only, and not other parts of the body.
- 41- The words «your faces», include the entire face, and indicate that all of it is to be wiped, but one is excused from having to insert dust into the mouth and nose, or make it reach the skin that is beneath facial hair, even if said hair is thin.
- 42- The hands are to be wiped up to the wrists only, because when the word *yadayn* (hands) is used in a general sense, what is meant is the hands.

If it were required that the wiping reach up to the forearms, Allah would have specified that as He did in the case of wuḍoo'.

- 43- The verse is general in meaning and indicates that tayammum is permissible for all types of impurity, both major and minor; in fact it is also permissible in the case of impurities on the body, because Allah has made it an alternative to purification with water and has mentioned it in general terms in this verse, and has not restricted it. (It may be said that impurities on the body are not included in the ruling on tayammum, because the context speaks of impurity [in the sense of minor or major impurity]. This is the view of the majority of scholars.)
- 44- The places of tayammum are the same in the case of both minor and major impurity, namely the face and hands.
- 45- If a person intends to do tayammum to purify himself from both types of impurity, this is acceptable, based on the general meaning of the verse.
- 46- It is sufficient to wipe with anything, with the hand or otherwise, because Allah said «and wipe», but He did not say what is to

be used for wiping. This indicates that it may be done with anything.

- 47- It is stipulated that things be done in a certain order when purifying oneself with tayammum, as is also stipulated in the case of wuḍoo'; moreover, Allah started with mention of wiping the face, before wiping the hands.
- 48- In the rulings that He has prescribed for us, Allah (ﷻ) has not caused us any hardship or difficulty. Rather it is mercy from Him towards His slaves, to purify them and complete His favour upon them.
- 49- Outward purification with water or dust is meant to be complementary to inward purification which is attained by affirming the oneness of Allah (*tawḥeed*) and repenting sincerely.
- 50- Even though there is no visible sign of purification in the case of tayammum, it is still an intangible, spiritual purification that comes about as a result of complying with the command of Allah (ﷻ).
- 51- One should reflect upon the wisdom behind the laws that Allah has ordained with regard to purification and other matters, so as to increase in knowledge and in gratitude and love for Allah, for what He has prescribed of rulings that enable one to reach a high status.



﴿وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ الَّذِي وَاتَّكُم بِهِ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧)

- 5:7. And remember the favour that Allah bestowed upon you, and His covenant that He made with you, when you said: We hear and we obey. And fear Allah, for Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His slaves to remember His spiritual and worldly blessings, in their hearts and verbally, because always remembering will motivate one to give thanks to Allah (ﷻ) and to love Him, and one's heart will be filled with gratitude to Him.

This dispels self-admiration with regard to acquiring spiritual blessings, and leads one to attribute everything to the bounty and generosity of Allah.

﴿and His covenant﴾ that is, and remember His covenant ﴿that He made with you﴾.

This does not mean that they spoke words and uttered the covenant verbally; rather what is meant is that by believing in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), they committed themselves to obeying both of them. Hence Allah says ﴿when you said: We hear and we obey﴾ that is, we hear what You have called us to of Your Qur'anic revelations and universal signs, hearing in the sense of understanding, complying and following, and we obey by complying with what You have enjoined us to do and by avoiding what You have forbidden us to do. This includes all the laws of Islam, both outwardly and inwardly.

The believers remember thereby the covenant of Allah that He made with them, and they bear it in mind and are eager to carry out what they have been instructed to do in full, not falling short.

﴿And fear Allah﴾ in all circumstances
 ﴿for Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts﴾ that is, what the hearts contain of ideas, secrets and passing thoughts; so beware lest He see in your heart that which is not pleasing to Him, or there come out of you that which He dislikes. Build your hearts with knowledge of Him, love for Him and sincerity towards His slaves, for – if you do that – He will forgive your bad deeds and multiply the reward for your good deeds, because He knows the sound condition of your hearts.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَتَاؤُنَ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٨)

5:8. O you who believe! Be steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing true witness impartially. Do not let your hatred of some people lead you away from justice. Be just; that is nearer to true piety. And fear Allah, for Allah is well aware of what you do.

«O you who believe» in what you are enjoined to believe in, carry out the requirements of your faith, by «bearing true witness impartially», and strive to be impartial and fair, both inwardly and outwardly. This effort should be for the sake of Allah alone, and not for any worldly purpose. You should aim for justice, which is equity, neither going to extremes nor falling short in your words or deeds; and you should do that with regard to relatives and strangers, friends and enemies.

«Do not let your hatred of some people lead you away from justice» That is, do not let your hatred make you fail to be just, as is done by those who are not just and fair. Rather, just as you would testify in your friend's favour, you should also testify against him, and just as you would testify against your enemy, you should also testify in his favour, even if he is a disbeliever or an innovator. You must treat him fairly and accept what he has of truth, because it is true, not because he says it. And you should not reject the truth because of what he said, because this is unfair towards the truth.

«Be just; that is nearer to true piety» that is, the more keen you are to be just and the more you strive to act accordingly, the closer that will be to true piety in your hearts, because perfect justice leads to perfect piety.

﴿for Allah is well aware of what you do﴾ and He will requite you for your deeds, both good and bad, small and great, in this world and in the hereafter.



﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة

المائدة: ٩-١٠)

- 5:9. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and an immense reward.
- 5:10. As for those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they will be inhabitants of the blazing fire.

That is, Allah, Who does not break His promise and is the most truthful in word, has promised to those who believe in Him and in His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, ﴿and do righteous deeds﴾, both obligatory and encouraged, forgiveness of their sins, by pardoning them and protecting them from the consequences thereof, and He has promised a great reward, the greatness of which no one knows but Allah.

﴿No soul knows what is kept hidden in store for them of delight as a reward for what they used to do.﴾ (as-Sajdah 32: 17)

﴿As for those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations﴾ which point to the clear truth, and they disbelieve in them after the facts has become clear

﴿they will be inhabitants of the blazing fire﴾ to abide therein forever.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ ءَن يَسْطُورُوا
إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١١)

- 5:11. O you who believe, remember the favour that Allah bestowed upon you when certain people decided to raise their hands against you and He held back their hands from you. So fear Allah, and in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Here Allah reminds His believing slaves of His great favour, and urges them to remember those blessings in their hearts and verbally. Just as they regard their killing of their enemies and seizing their wealth, land and captives as a blessing, they should also remember His other blessings, whereby He restrained the disbelievers and prevented them from harming them, and caused their plot to fail – this was also a blessing, because the enemy planned something and thought that they would be able to do it, but when they were not able to do what they wanted to the believers, that was by the help of Allah to His believing slaves. So they should give thanks to Allah for that, and worship Him and remember Him. This includes everyone who intended harm to the believers, whether he was a disbeliever, a hypocrite or a transgressor whose evil Allah warded off from the Muslims. All of that is included in this verse.

Then Allah instructs them to do that which will help them to prevail over their enemies and help them in all their affairs, as He says: ﴿and in Allah let the believers put their trust﴾ that is, let them depend on Him to achieve their interests, both spiritual and worldly; let them declare that they have no power or strength in themselves; and let them trust Allah to help them achieve what they want, according to

each person's level of faith and degree of reliance. This is one of the obligations of the heart on which there is consensus.



﴿ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَءَامَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَلْبًا عِيسِيًّا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٢-١٣)

- 5:12. Allah took a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We appointed twelve leaders from among them. And Allah said: I am with you; if you establish prayer, give zakâh, believe in My Messengers and support them, and lend to Allah a goodly loan, I will surely expiate your bad deeds for you, and admit you to gardens through which rivers flow. But if any of you, after this, disbelieves, he will indeed have strayed from the right path.
- 5:13. But because of their breaking of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard. They distort the meaning of [revealed] words and have forgotten a portion of what was enjoined upon them. You will not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. So pardon them, and overlook [their misdeeds], for Allah loves those who do good.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He took a solemn and binding oath from the Children of Israel, and He mentions the nature of that oath,

their reward if they fulfil it, and their punishment if they fail to do so. Then He tells us that they did not fulfil it, and He describes how He punished them for that.

﴿Allah took a covenant from the Children of Israel﴾ that is, a solemn and binding pledge from them

﴿and We appointed twelve leaders from among them﴾ that is, chiefs who were leaders of those under them, whose role was to be in charge of them and urge them to do what they were instructed to do.

﴿And Allah said﴾ to the twelve leaders who took on the burdens of leadership

﴿I am with you﴾ that is, by My help and support, for help is commensurate with the size of the burden.

Then Allah tells us the terms of their covenant with them:

﴿if you establish prayer﴾ both outwardly and inwardly, by performing the prayer correctly with proper focus of mind, doing what is required in the manner in which it should be done, and persisting in that

﴿give zakâh﴾ to those who are entitled to it

﴿believe in My Messengers﴾ – all of them, the best and most perfect of whom is Muhammad (ﷺ)

﴿and support them﴾ and respect them, and do your duty towards them by honouring and obeying them

﴿and lend to Allah a goodly loan﴾ which is charity and kindness that stem from sincerity, given from permissible earnings.

If you do that, ﴿I will surely expiate your bad deeds for you, and admit you to gardens through which rivers flow﴾. Thus He will combine for them attaining that which they want of paradise with all the delights it contains and warding off that which they dislike by expiating bad deeds and warding off what results from them of punishments.

﴿But if any of you, after this﴾ covenant that is confirmed by oaths and pledges, accompanied by encouragement by way of mentioning the reward

﴿disbelieves, he will indeed have strayed from the right path﴾ that is, deliberately and knowingly, so he will deserve what those who go astray deserve of being deprived of the reward and being punished. It is as if one may ask, at the end of the verse: I wonder what they did (after all these warnings); did they fulfil the covenant that they made with Allah, or did they break it?

Thus in the following verse, Allah explains that they broke the covenant, as He says:

﴿But because of their breaking of their covenant﴾ that is, because of that, they received a number of punishments:

- 1- ﴿We cursed them﴾ that is, We expelled them and cast them far away from Our mercy, as they closed the gates of mercy to themselves, and did not fulfil the covenant that was taken from them, which is the main reason for the curse.
- 2- ﴿and made their hearts grow hard﴾ that is, harsh and tough, so that no exhortation had any impact on them, and they did not benefit from the signs and warnings; they were not encouraged by mention of rewards and they were not deterred by warnings of the consequences. This is one of the greatest punishments a person may receive, for his heart to become like this, with the result that reminders of guidance and goodness only make him persist in evil.
- 3- ﴿They distort the meaning of [revealed] words﴾ that is, they indulged in the sin of changing and altering the scriptures, so they changed the meanings of words to something other than what was intended by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).
- 4- ﴿and have forgotten a portion of what was enjoined upon them﴾. They were enjoined to follow the Torah and what Allah revealed to Moosâ, but they forgot a portion of it. This includes forgetting the knowledge, for they forgot it and it was lost to them, and much of what Allah caused them to forget no longer exists, as a punishment to them. It also includes forgetting to act upon it,

which means failing to do it. They were not enabled to do that which they had been instructed to do. This is an argument that may be used against the People of the Book, when they deny some of that which was mentioned in their Books or that took place during their time; it is part of what they have forgotten (as indicated in the verse).

- 5- Ongoing treachery: ﴿You will not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them﴾ that is, treachery towards Allah and towards His believing slaves.

One of the greatest betrayals on their part is their concealing the truth from those to whom they give religious teaching and those who think positively of them, thus causing them to remain disbelievers. This is a serious betrayal and blameworthy characteristic which is applicable to everyone who is like them. Anyone who does not do what Allah has enjoined and taken a pledge from him to do has a share in the curse and hardness of heart, and is indulging in the sin of distorting (revealed) words. He is not going to be guided to the correct path, he will forget a portion of that which was enjoined upon him, and it is inevitable that he will commit acts of betrayal. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.

﴿all save a few of them﴾ that is, who did fulfil what they pledged to do in their covenant with Allah, so He helped them and guided them to the straight path.

﴿So pardon them﴾ that is, do not take them to task for what they have done of harm, which implies that they should be pardoned and forgiven, for that is part of doing good, and ﴿Allah loves those who do good﴾. *Ihsân* (translated here as doing good) means that you worship Allah as if you can see Him, for even though you cannot see Him, He sees you. *Ihsân* with regard to people means trying to benefit them in spiritual and worldly terms.



﴿وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي أَخَذْنَا مِيثَقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا
ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ وَسَوْفَ
يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٤)

- 5:14. From those who call themselves Christians, We also took a covenant, but they too forgot a portion of what was enjoined upon them. So We have stirred up enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Resurrection. And soon Allah will inform them of what they used to do.

That is, just as We took a covenant from the Jews, We also took a covenant from those who call themselves Christians that is, followers of 'Eesâ ibn Maryam, and they purified themselves by believing in Allah and His Messengers and what they brought. But then they broke the covenant and forgot a portion of what was enjoined upon them; they forgot knowledge of it and they forgot how to act upon it.

«So We have stirred up enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Resurrection» that is, We turned them against one another, and troubles and conflicts arose among them which generated hatred and enmity towards one another, which will last until the Day of Resurrection. This is something that we see, for the Christians are still, and will continue to be, in a state of mutual hatred, enmity and division.

«And soon Allah will inform them of what they used to do» and punish them for it.



﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٥-١٦)

- 5:15. O People of the Book, there has come to you our Messenger, disclosing to you much of what you have been concealing of the scripture, and overlooking much. There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book,
- 5:16. with which Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leads them out of the depths of darkness to the light, by His leave, and guides them to a straight path.

Having mentioned the covenant that He took from the People of the Book, namely the Jews and Christians, and having stated that they broke that covenant, all save a few of them, Allah commands them all to believe in Muhammad (ﷺ), and presents them with definitive proof of the truthfulness of his prophethood, which is: He discloses to them much of that which they were concealing from the people, even from the common folk among their co-religionists, as they were the ones who were known to have knowledge, and no one had knowledge at that time except what they had. Therefore the one who was eager to acquire knowledge had no means of doing so except from them. The fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought this great Qur'an which disclosed that which they had been concealing amongst themselves – when he was unlettered and could neither read nor write – is one of the clearest proofs of the truthfulness of his message. (The matters that they were concealing include) the description of Muhammad

(ﷺ) in their Books, the foretelling of his coming in their Books, the verse on stoning, and so on.

﴿and overlooking much﴾ that is, He did not disclose that which there was no reason to disclose.

﴿There has come to you from Allah a light﴾ which is the Qur'an, which illuminates the darkness of ignorance and the blindness of misguidance.

﴿and a clear Book﴾ which explains everything that people need to know of religious and worldly matters, such as knowledge of Allah, His names, His attributes and His actions, as well as knowledge of the rulings of Sharia.

Then Allah mentions the one who is guided by this Qur'an, and the reason why he attains that, as He says: ﴿with which Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety﴾ that is, He guides thereby the one who strives and is keen to attain the pleasure of Allah, and whose intention is good, to ways of peace and safety that will save him from punishment and enable him to reach paradise. This refers to knowledge of the truth and acting upon it, in general and in detail.

﴿and leads them out of the depths of darkness﴾ that is, the darkness of disbelief, innovation, sin, ignorance and heedlessness, to the light of faith, the Sunnah, obedience, knowledge and remembrance of Allah.

All of this guidance is by Allah's leave; whatever He wills happens and whatever He does not will does not happen. ﴿and guides them to a straight path﴾



﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمُّهُ

وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرٰتِى عَنَّا ابْنَتُوٓا۟ اللَّهُ وَاجْتَبَوْهُ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٧-١٨)

- 5:17. They indeed have disbelieved who say that Allah is the Messiah, the son of Maryam. Say: Who could prevent Allah, if He so willed, from destroying the Messiah, the son of Maryam, his mother, and all the people of the earth? To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates whatever He wills, and Allah has power over all things.
- 5:18. The Jews and the Christians say: We are children of Allah, and His beloved ones. Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, you are but human beings among those He has created. He forgives whomever He wills, and He punishes whomever He wills. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, and unto Him is the return [of all].

Having mentioned His covenant with the people of the two Books, and that they did not adhere to it – rather they broke it – Allah (ﷻ) then tells us of their abhorrent beliefs.

He tells us of the Christian belief, which no one but they believed in, namely the belief that God is the Messiah, the son of Maryam. The basis for their specious argument is the fact that he was born without a father, so they devised this false belief concerning him, despite the fact that he had a counterpart in Hawwâ', who was created without a mother; and Adam is an even stronger example, as he was created without a father or a mother. So why did they not claim that

they (Adam and Ḥawwâ') were divine, as they claimed with regard to the Messiah?

This indicates that their belief was the result of following whims and desires, without any proof and without any reason to do so. But Allah refuted them with clear, rational evidence, as He said: ﴿Say: Who could prevent Allah, if He so willed, from destroying the Messiah, the son of Maryam, his mother, and all the people of the earth?﴾ If those mentioned above have no power to save themselves, if it were Allah's will to destroy them, and they have no ability to prevent that, this is indicative of the falseness of the claim of divinity for one who cannot protect himself from being destroyed and has no power to escape from divine control. Furthermore, ﴿To Allah﴾ alone ﴿belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾; He controls them and everything is subject to His control in every way. So is it appropriate to suggest that a poor, dependent slave could be a deity who is independent of means in all ways? This is utterly impossible.

There is no reason for their finding it amazing that the Messiah 'Eesâ ibn Maryam was created without a father, for Allah ﴿creates whatever He wills﴾ – if He wills, (He creates a human) from a mother and father, like all the sons of Adam; or if He wills, He creates a human from a father, without a mother, like Ḥawwâ', or from a mother without a father, like 'Eesâ, or without a father or a mother, like Adam. Allah (ﷻ) varies His creation according to His will, which is always done, and nothing is too difficult for Him. Hence He says: ﴿and Allah has power over all things﴾.

Another thing that the Jews and Christians say is that both of them make false claims and praise themselves, as each group says: ﴿We are children of Allah, and His beloved ones﴾.

In their language, the word "son" means "beloved"; they do not mean sons in a literal sense, because this is not their belief; rather that is what the Christians believe about the Messiah.

Allah says, refuting them and the claim they made without proof: ﴿Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins?﴾ If you were His beloved ones, He would not have punished you, because Allah does not love anyone except the one who does deeds that are pleasing to Him.

﴿Nay, you are but human beings among those He has created﴾, and you are subject to the rulings of justice and grace.

﴿He forgives whomever He wills, and He punishes whomever He wills﴾ if they take the steps that lead to forgiveness or to punishment.

﴿To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, and unto Him is the return [of all]﴾ that is, how is it that you acquired this virtue (of being the “children of God”) when you are among that dominion and are among those who will be returned to Allah in the hereafter, and He will requite you for your deeds?



﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

(سورة المائدة: ١٩)

5:19. O People of the Book, there has come to you our Messenger, making things clear to you, after an interval in which there were no Messengers, lest you should say: No bearer of glad tidings and no warner ever came to us. But now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. And Allah has power over all things.

Here Allah (ﷻ) calls the People of the Book – because of what He blessed them with of His scripture – to believe in His Messenger

Muhammad (ﷺ) and to give thanks to Allah (ﷻ) Who sent him to them ﴿after an interval in which there were no Messengers﴾, at a time when there was a great need for him.

This (their need for him and the long interval since the coming of any Messenger) is what should prompt them to believe in him, for he explains to them everything that Allah requires of them and the rulings of Sharia. By doing this, Allah left them with no excuses, so they cannot say: ﴿No bearer of glad tidings and no warner ever came to us. But now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner﴾ giving glad tidings of reward in this world and in the hereafter, describing the deeds that will lead to that and the characteristics of the people who do those deeds, and warning of punishment in this world and in the hereafter, describing the deeds that will lead to that and the characteristics of the people who do those deeds.

﴿And Allah has power over all things﴾ – all things submit willingly to His power, so nothing can go beyond His power and control. Among the signs of His power is the fact that He sends the Messengers and reveals the Books, and He rewards those who obey Him and punishes those who disobey Him.



﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَنْقُومِ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَءَاتَاكُمْ مَّا لَمْ يُوْت أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَنْقُومِ أَذْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْدُوا عَلَىٰ أَذْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنْدْخُلُهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنهَا فَإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٢٠-٢٢)

- 5:20. And [remember] when Moosâ said to his people: O my people, remember the favour that Allah bestowed upon you, when He

appointed Prophets among you, made you kings, and granted you what He had not granted to any other nation in the world.

5:21. O my people, enter the holy land which Allah has assigned to you, and do not turn back, lest you return as losers.

5:22. They said: O Moosâ, in this land are a ferocious people; we will never enter it until they leave it, then if they leave, we will enter it.

When Allah blessed Moosâ and his people by saving them from Pharaoh and his people, and from captivity and enslavement to them, they left and headed towards their homeland, which was Jerusalem and its environs. Allah had enjoined them to strive in jihad against the enemy in order to expel them from their lands. So when they approached Jerusalem, Moosâ (ﷺ) exhorted them and reminded them to go forward for jihad, and said to them: ﴿remember the favour that Allah bestowed upon you﴾ that is, remember it in your hearts and verbally, for remembering it will increase you in love for Allah (ﷻ) and motivate you to worship Him

﴿when He appointed Prophets among you﴾ who called you to true guidance, warned you against following the path of doom, urged you to strive for your eternal happiness and taught you that which you do not know

﴿made you kings﴾, in charge of your own affairs, as He liberated you from enslavement to your enemies, so that you became in charge of your own affairs and were able to practise your religion.

﴿and granted you﴾ spiritual and worldly blessings that ﴿He had not granted to any other nation in the world﴾ – for at that time they were the best of humanity and the dearest of them to Allah, and He had bestowed upon them blessings that had not been given to anyone else.

Moosâ reminded them of spiritual and worldly blessings that should have increased them in steadfastness of faith and steadfastness in jihad and willingness to engage therein. Hence he said: ﴿O my people, enter

the holy» that is, purified «land which Allah has assigned to you». Thus he told them something that would put their minds at rest, if they truly believed, by telling them that Allah had decreed that they would enter this land and would prevail over their enemies.

«and do not turn back» that is, retreat «lest you return as losers», as you would have lost out in this world by missing out on victory over your enemies and regaining your land; you would also lose out in the hereafter because of what you would miss out on of reward and because of what you would bring upon yourselves of punishment because of your sin.

But they said something that was indicative of their lack of resolve and their lack of due respect towards Allah and His Messenger. «They said: O Moosâ, in this land are a ferocious people» that is, powerful and courageous, and this is an impediment which prevents us from entering the land.

«we will never enter it until they leave it, then if they leave, we will enter it» this stems from cowardice and lack of certain faith; otherwise, if they were mature, they would have realised that they were all descendants of Adam and that the strong one is the one whom Allah helps with strength from Him, for there is no power and no strength except with Allah. They would also have realised that they would be granted victory over them, because Allah had given them a special promise to that effect.



﴿ قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالُوا يَمْيُوسَى إِنَّ لَنَا نَدْخُلَهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي ۖ فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ

الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَذِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٢٣-٢٦)

- 5:23. Two men among those who feared Allah, and whom Allah had blessed, said: Enter upon them through the gate! Once you enter it, you will surely be victorious. And in Allah put your trust, if you are [truly] believers.
- 5:24. They said: O Moosâ, we will never enter it so long as they are there. Go, you and your Lord, and fight, and we will stay here.
- 5:25. He said: O my Lord, I have control only over myself and my brother, so distinguish us from these rebellious people!
- 5:26. [Allah said:] Then, verily, this [land] will be forbidden to them for forty years, while they wander on earth, bewildered, to and fro. So do not grieve over these rebellious people.

﴿Two men among those who feared Allah﴾ spoke up to encourage their people and motivate them to find their enemy and occupy their land

﴿and whom Allah had blessed﴾ with divine help and the ability to speak the truth in this situation which required such words, and He blessed them with patience and certain faith.

﴿said: Enter upon them through the gate! Once you enter it, you will surely be victorious﴾ that is, there is nothing standing between you and victory over them except your moving to attack them and enter upon them through the gate; when you do so, they will be defeated.

Then they instructed them to equip themselves with the strongest of weapons, as they said: ﴿And in Allah put your trust, if you are [truly] believers﴾, for by putting one's trust in Allah, especially in this situation, things will be made easier and you will be helped to prevail over your enemies. This indicates that putting one's trust in Allah is obligatory, and a person's level of trust will be commensurate with his level of faith.

But these words did not meet with success and blaming them was of no benefit, for they said, like people who have no pride or dignity: «O Moosâ, we will never enter it so long as they are there. Go, you and your Lord, and fight, and we will stay here.» How abhorrent are the words they spoke and their attitude towards their Prophet in this difficult and critical situation, which required them to support their Prophet and maintain their dignity.

This and similar stories highlight the difference between all other nations and the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ), as the Şahâbah said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) – when he consulted them about fighting on the day of Badr, even though he did not make it a must that they should fight: O Messenger of Allah, if you were to go through this sea, we would go through it with you, and if you were to lead us to Bark al-Ghamâd, no one would stay behind. We will not say as the people of Moosâ said to him, «Go, you and your Lord, and fight, and we will stay here». Rather go, you and your Lord, and fight, and we will fight with you, in front of you and behind you, on your right and on your left.

When Moosâ saw how stubborn they were towards him, «He said: O my Lord, I have control only over myself and my brother» that is, we have no power to fight them, and I do not have any control over these people.

«so distinguish us from these rebellious people» that is, judge between us and them, by sending upon them punishment as Your wisdom dictates. This indicates that what they said and did constituted major sins that were tantamount to evildoing.

Allah said in response to Moosâ's prayer: «Then, verily, this [land] will be forbidden to them for forty years, while they wander on earth, bewildered, to and fro» that is, as part of their punishment, We will forbid them to enter this town which Allah had decreed should be theirs, for a period of forty years. During that period, they would also wander to and fro on earth, and would not find their way or be

settled and at peace. This was a worldly punishment, by means of which Allah (ﷻ) may have expiated their sin and warded off a greater punishment. This indicates that punishment for sin may take the form of the removal of a blessing. Perhaps the wisdom behind making the punishment last for this length of time was that most of those would die who had said these things and had not been patient and steadfast; rather they had become accustomed to enslavement to their enemies, and had no aspirations that would motivate them to do that which would lead to acquiring a high status. Thus a new generation would appear that would develop aspirations of defeating their enemy and not being enslaved, and would be far removed from accepting humiliation that poses an impediment to happiness.

When Allah (ﷻ) saw that His slave Moosâ was very compassionate towards people, especially his own people, and that he might feel sorry for them, and his compassion would cause him to feel sorry for them because of this punishment or pray for it to be removed, even though Allah had decreed that it should happen, He said: «So do not grieve over these rebellious people» that is, do not feel sorry for them or feel sad, because they have rebelled and their rebellion dictates that what befell them should befall them; it does not stem from injustice on Our part.



﴿وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُنْقَبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَا قُنْتُكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ لَئِنْ بَطَلْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِي سَوْءَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يُوتِلَقُ
 أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوْرِي سَوْءَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ
 ﴿سورة المائدة: ٢٧-٣١﴾

- 5:27. Recount to them the story of the two sons of Adam in truth, when each offered a sacrifice [to Allah]. It was accepted from one, but not from the other. [The latter] said: I will surely kill you. [The former] said: Verily, Allah only accepts from those who fear Him.
- 5:28. Even if you raise your hand against me to kill me, I will not raise my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
- 5:29. and I would rather you were burdened with your sin against me as well as your own sins and thus became one of the inhabitants of the fire; such is the recompense of the wrongdoers.
- 5:30. But he was prompted by his evil inclinations to kill his brother. So he killed him, and thus became one of the losers.
- 5:31. Then Allah sent a crow which scratched at the earth to show him how to conceal his brother's corpse. He said: Woe is me! Could I not have been like this crow, and covered up my brother's corpse? And he became one of the remorseful.

That is: tell the people about what happened between the two sons of Adam in truth, so that people will reflect and learn from it, because it is true and is not a lie; it is serious and is not a joke. What appears to be the case is that the two sons of Adam were his own sons, as is indicated by the apparent meaning and context of the verse. This is the view of the majority of commentators. In other words: tell them the story of what happened when they offered a sacrifice, which led to the situation described here.

﴿when each offered a sacrifice [to Allah]﴾ that is, each of them set aside some part of his wealth in order to draw closer to Allah

﴿It was accepted from one, but not from the other﴾ – this was known either through revelation from heaven or through the custom that prevailed among earlier nations: the sign of Allah's acceptance of a sacrifice was that fire would come down from heaven and consume it.

﴿[The latter] said﴾ that is, the son whose sacrifice was not accepted said to the other, out of envy and resentment:

﴿I will surely kill you﴾. His brother said to him, trying to speak gently to him: ﴿Verily, Allah only accepts from those who fear Him﴾; what sin or offence have I committed that would dictate that you should kill me, apart from the fact that I feared Allah (ﷻ), and fearing Him is obligatory for both you and me, and for everyone? The more correct view concerning the meaning of fearing Allah here is that what is referred to is those who show the quality of fearing Allah in doing that action (of sacrifice), in the sense that their action is done sincerely for the sake of Allah, following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Then he told him that he did not want to kill him, either on his own initiative or in self-defence, as he said: ﴿Even if you raise your hand against me to kill me, I will not raise my hand against you to kill you﴾ and this is not cowardice or incapability on my part; rather it is because ﴿I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds﴾, and the one who fears Allah does not commit sins, especially major sins.

This is aimed at warding off one who wants to kill, telling him: You should fear Allah.

﴿and I would rather you were burdened with﴾ that is, that you should end up carrying ﴿your sin against me as well as your own sins﴾ that is, if there is a choice between being killing you or being killed by you, then I would prefer that you should kill me and thus be burdened with the sins of us both

﴿and thus became one of the inhabitants of the fire; such is the recompense of the wrongdoers﴾. This indicates that murder is a major sin and that the one who commits it deserves to enter hell.

But the offender was not deterred by that, and he was still determined to go ahead with his action. So he responded to his evil inclinations and killed his brother, whom he should have respected according to the laws of Allah and of nature.

«So he killed him, and thus became one of the losers» who lose out in this world and in the hereafter, and thus he set a precedent for every killer.

«Whoever sets a bad precedent will have the burden of that sin and a burden like that of everyone who does likewise until the Day of Resurrection.» (Recorded by at-Ṭabarâni)

Hence it is stated in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadith that:

«No one kills another person but the first son of Adam will have a share of the guilt, because he was the first one to set the precedent of killing.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

When he killed his brother, he did not know what to do with him, because he was the first of the sons of Adam to die.

«Then Allah sent a crow which scratched at the earth» that is, it dug a hole to bury another crow that had died

«to show him» thereby «how to conceal his brother's corpse» that is, his body, because the body of the deceased is something that is to be covered ('awrah).

«And he became one of the remorseful». Such is the consequence of sin: regret and loss.



﴿مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ ذَهُمَ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ بَعْدَ

ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُتْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣٢)

5:32. Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person – unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all humankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all humankind. Our Messengers came to them with clear signs, yet even after that, many of them continued to exceed the limits in the land.

«Because of that» that is, what is mentioned above of the story of the two sons of Adam and how one of them killed the other, thus setting a precedent of murder for those who came after him, and in order to show that the punishment for murder is serious and leads to loss in this world and the hereafter

«We ordained for the Children of Israel» that is, the people of the divinely revealed Books

«that if anyone killed a person – unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading mischief in the land» that is, if anyone killed a person unlawfully

«it would be as if he killed all humankind», because he had no legitimate reason to do so, and no one should kill another person unless he has a legitimate reason to do so. If a person has the audacity to kill someone who did not deserve to be killed, it means that he does not differentiate between the one whom he killed and anyone else; rather he would do that every time his soul that is inclined towards evil prompts him to do so. Therefore his audacity in killing is as if he killed all of humankind.

By the same token if a person saves a life – that is, he lets him live and does not kill him even though his evil inclinations prompt him to do so, because his fear of Allah (ﷻ) prevents him from doing that, this is as if he saved the life of all of humankind, because the fear of Allah that he has prevents him from killing anyone who does not deserve to be killed. This verse indicates that execution is permissible in two

cases: when someone has killed a person unlawfully and deliberately, in which case it is permissible to execute him, if the murderer is accountable; or if he is spreading mischief in the land, trying to make the people doubt their religion or causing them physical harm or posing a danger to their property, such as apostate disbelievers, enemy combatants and promoters of innovation whose evil cannot be warded off except by executing them. The same applies to bandits and the like who attack people, killing them or taking their wealth.

﴿Our Messengers came to them with clear signs﴾ after which no one can have any argument

﴿yet even after that﴾ that is, even after that clear, definitive proof that would show the way in which people should conduct themselves on earth

﴿many of them continued to exceed the limits﴾ by committing sins and opposing the Messengers who brought clear signs and proof.



﴿إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٣٣-٣٤)

- 5:33. The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive to spread mischief in the land, is that they should be executed, or crucified, or their hands and feet cut off from opposite sides, or banished from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and in the hereafter, theirs will be a grievous punishment.

5:34. Except for those who repent before you overpower them; in that case, know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) are those who have declared their enmity and spread mischief in the land, by disbelieving, murdering, taking people's wealth and terrorising people on the road (banditry).

It is well known that this verse speaks of the rulings on bandits, those who attack people in the cities and the desert, seizing their wealth, killing them and scaring them, so that people refrain from taking the route where they are.

Allah tells us that the recompense and punishment – when the hadd punishment is carried out on them – is for one of these things to be done to them.

The commentators differed as to whether that is the matter of choice, and whether the ruler or his deputy may do to each bandit whatever he sees fit of the things mentioned, which is the apparent meaning of the wording, or whether the punishment should be according to the level of the crime, so that for each crime there is a fitting punishment, as is indicated by the meaning of the verse, which is in accordance with the wisdom of Allah (ﷻ). (According to this view), if the bandits kill people and take their wealth, then they must be killed and crucified, so that everyone will know about that and will be deterred. If they kill but do not take wealth, then they must be executed only. If they take wealth but do not kill, then their hands and feet on opposite sides – the right hand and the left foot – are to be cut off. If they terrorise people but do not kill or take wealth, then they are to be banished from the land, and they should not be left to find refuge in any city, unless they repent openly. This is the view of Ibn 'Abbās and many leading scholars, with some differences concerning some of the details.

«That» namely this punishment «is their disgrace» that is, scandal and shame «in this world, and in the hereafter, theirs will be a grievous punishment». This indicates that banditry is one of the major sins that incur disgrace in this world and punishment in the hereafter, and that the one who engages in it is waging war against Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). As this is the extent of the seriousness of this crime, it is known that purifying the land of evildoers and making the roads safe from killing, seizing wealth and scaring people, is one of the greatest of good deeds, and that it comes under the heading of spreading peace in the land, the opposite of which is spreading mischief in the land.

«Except for those who repent before you overpower them» that is, they repent from committing these crimes against the public.

«in that case, know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful» that is, the punishment for the sin that he committed against Allah will be waived, with regard to having to be killed or crucified, or to have his hand and foot cut off, or be banished from the land; the sin he committed against other people will also be waived, if the aggressor (bandit) was a disbeliever then became Muslim. But if the aggressor (bandit) is a Muslim, then the rights that he owes to other people are not waived, if he murdered and took wealth. The verse indicates that the repentance of an aggressor (bandit) – after he has been overpowered – does not waive any of the obligations he has. The wisdom behind that is quite clear.

But if his repentance comes before he is overpowered, then the ḥadd punishment for waging war against Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), or other ḥadd punishment, is waived – if he repents from his deed before being overpowered.



﴿يَتَّيِبَهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣٥)

5:35. O you who believe, fear Allah, seek the means of drawing closer to Him, and strive hard in His cause, so that you may prosper.

This is a command from Allah to His believing slaves to do what faith requires of fearing Allah and being cautious to avoid incurring His wrath and anger, by striving hard in doing one's utmost to avoid sins of the heart, tongue and physical faculties, both outward and inward, and seeking Allah's help to avoid these things, in order to save oneself from the wrath and punishment of Allah.

﴿seek the means of drawing closer to Him﴾ that is, the means of nearness to Him and endearing yourselves to him, by doing obligatory spiritual deeds, such as loving Him and loving for His sake, fear and hope, turning to Him and putting one's trust in Him, as well as physical deeds such as zakâh and Hajj. That also includes actions that are both spiritual and physical, such as prayer, reading Qur'an and remembering Allah (dhikr), as well as showing kindness to people by financial means, sharing knowledge, using one's position or status to help, and being sincere towards the slaves of Allah.

All of these deeds bring one closer to Allah, and a person will continue drawing closer to Allah by means of them, until Allah loves him, and when He loves him, He will be his hearing with which he hears, his vision with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks, and Allah will answer his supplications.

Then Allah (ﷻ) singles out from among acts of worship that bring one closer to Him: jihad in His cause, which means striving to fight the disbelievers with one's wealth and life, by planning, speaking

and striving to support the religion of Allah with all means at one's disposal, because this is one of the best acts of worship that bring one closer to Allah. That is because the one who does that is more likely to do other things too.

﴿so that you may prosper﴾ – if you fear Allah by avoiding sin, seek means of nearness to Allah by doing acts of worship, and strive in His cause, seeking His pleasure.

Prosperity means triumph, attaining all that one seeks and hopes for, and being saved from all that one fears. What it really means is eternal happiness and everlasting joy.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ مَا نَقُولُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣٦-٣٧)

(٣٧-٣٦)

5:36. As for those who disbelieve, even if they had everything on earth, and as much again with it, to offer as their ransom from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them, and theirs will be a painful punishment.

5:37. They will wish to get out of the fire, but never will they get out of it. Theirs will be an everlasting punishment.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the terrible condition of the disbelievers before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and their awful fate, and that even if they were to offer an earthful of gold and as much again as ransom from the punishment of Allah, it will not be accepted from them and it will not benefit them, because the time for ransom will be over and there will be nothing left but the painful punishment and

eternal suffering from which they will never escape; rather they will abide therein for ever.



﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ مَن تَابَ مِن بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣٨-٤٠)

- 5:38. As for the thief, male or female, cut off their hands as a recompense for what they have done, and as an exemplary punishment ordained by Allah. Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.
- 5:39. But whoever repents after having thus done wrong and mends his ways, Allah will accept his repentance, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 5:40. Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whomever He will, and He forgives whomever He will, and Allah has power over all things.

The thief is the one who takes another person's property that is protected by Sharia, in a surreptitious manner, without the owner's consent. It is one of the major sins that dictate a severe punishment, which is amputation of the right hand, as is specified in the recitation of some of the Ṣaḥābah.

The ḥadd punishment entails cutting off their hands from the wrist. If a person steals, his hand is to be cut off from the wrist, then the bleeding is to be stopped by cauterising it with hot oil. This is the punishment mentioned in general terms in the Qur'an, but the Sunnah restricts the general meaning of this verse in a number of ways:

- That the stolen item should have been taken from the place where such items are usually kept safe; if it is stolen from some place other than that, then the thief's hand is not to be cut off.
- That there should be a minimum value for the stolen property, which is one quarter of a dinar or three dirhams, or whatever is equivalent to either of them. If the stolen property is of less value than that, then the thief's hand is not to be cut off.

This may be understood from the word *as-sariqah* (theft) and its meanings. This word refers to taking an item in such a way that it is not possible to protect against. This applies if it is stored properly; if it is not stored properly and is taken, this is not theft per se according to Sharia.

Wisdom also dictates that the hand should not be cut off for theft of a trivial item. As there must be a set definition of what is valuable, the shar'i texts make clear the minimum value.

The wisdom behind cutting off the hand as a punishment for theft is so that this will protect people's property, as people will be cautious lest the limb that committed the crime be cut off. If the thief steals again, his left foot is to be cut off. If he does it again, it was suggested that his left hand be cut off, then his right foot, or that he be detained until he dies.

﴿as a recompense for what they have done﴾ that is, this cutting off of their hands is the recompense to the thief for what he stole of people's property

﴿and as an exemplary punishment ordained by Allah﴾ that is, to make an example of him and to deter the thief and others, if they know that their hands will be cut off if they steal.

﴿Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾ – because He is Almighty, Most Wise, He ordained that the hand of the thief is to be cut off.

﴿But whoever repents after having thus done wrong and mends his ways, Allah will accept his repentance, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving,

Most Merciful» so He will forgive the one who repents and gives up sin, and mends his ways and reforms himself. That is because Allah is the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, and He decrees concerning them however He wills; He decrees what will happen and He ordains laws, and He decrees forgiveness or punishment according to His wisdom and vast mercy.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الرُّسُولُ لَا يَحْزَنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْكِرُونَ فِي الْكَفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّعُوا لِلْكَذِبِ سَمْعًا لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُخَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرْ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ سَمَّعُوا لِلْكَذِبِ أَكْثَلُونَ لِلْحَقِّ فَإِنْ جَاءُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَكَيْفَ يُحْكِمُونَكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرَةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يُحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَآخِشُوا وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِإِيتَانِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٤١-٤٤)

5:41. O Messenger, do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief, those who say with their mouths: We believe, but have no faith in their hearts, or those among the Jews who eagerly

listen to lies and to those who have not even come to you. They distort the meaning of [revealed] words and say: If you are given this [ruling], accept it, but if you are not, then beware! Whoever Allah wills should be misguided, you cannot help him against Allah in any way. Those are the ones for whom it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the hereafter theirs will be a grievous punishment.

- 5:42. They eagerly listen to lies and devour what is unlawful. If they do come to you [O Muhammad], either judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, not the least harm will they do to you, and if you judge, then judge with justice between them, for Allah loves those who are just.
- 5:43. But how is it that they ask you for judgement when they have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement, and they still turn away? Such people are not [truly] believers.
- 5:44. Verily We revealed the Torah, in which was guidance and light. By it the Prophets who submitted [to Allah] judged the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars, for to them was entrusted the protection of the scripture of Allah, and they were witnesses thereto. So do not fear people, but fear Me, and do not sell My revelations for a small price. And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, such are disbelievers.

Because the Messenger (ﷺ) was so concerned for people, he would feel very sad when someone made an outward display of faith, then returned to disbelief. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) instructed him not to feel sad or grieved for such people, because such people were not worth it; if they are present they contribute nothing and if they are absent, no one misses them.

Therefore Allah said, explaining the reason why he should not grieve for them: ﴿those who say with their mouths: We believe, but have no faith in their hearts﴾. Rather those for whom one should feel concerned are those who were counted as believers and were

indeed believers both outwardly and inwardly. It is very unlikely that these people would recant their religion and apostatise, for when faith becomes entrenched in the heart, the individual would not regard anything else as equal to it, nor would he want to replace it with anything else.

﴿or those among the Jews who eagerly listen to lies and to those who have not even come to you﴾ that is, they follow in the footsteps of their leaders whose affair is based on lies, misguidance and wrongdoing. Those leaders ﴿have not even come to you﴾; rather they turned away from you and rejoiced in what they had of falsehood, which is based on distorting the meaning of (revealed) words, that is, explaining the meanings in a way that Allah did not intend in order to misguide people and ward off the truth. These are the ones who are following the callers of misguidance, who fabricate all kinds of lies, and are lacking in reason and aspirations. So do not worry about them if they do not follow you, because they are seriously flawed, and no attention should be paid to one who is flawed.

﴿and say: If you are given this [ruling], accept it, but if you are not, then beware!﴾ That is, this is what they say when they refer to you for judgement, and their only aim is to follow their whims and desires. They say to one another: If Muhammad (ﷺ) rules in your favour and it is in accordance with your whims and desires, then accept his ruling, but if he does not rule in your favour, then beware of following him in that. This is giving into temptation and following the whims and desires of the nafs.

﴿Whoever Allah wills should be misguided, you cannot help him against Allah in any way﴾. This is akin to the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, you [O Muhammad] cannot guide whomever you like, but Allah guides whomever He wills...﴾ (*al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 56)

«Those are the ones for whom it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts» that is, therefore they did what they did. This indicates that in the case of one whose intention in referring for judgement to Sharia is to follow his whims and desires, and if the verdict is in his favour he will accept it, but if it is not then he will resent it, that is because his heart is not purified. By the same token, if a person refers his opponent to Sharia, and he accepts the verdict whether it suits him or not, then this is a sign of purity of the heart. This indicates that purity of heart is a means of attaining all that is good, and it is the main reason for all good words and righteous deeds.

«For them there is disgrace in this world» that is, shame and scandal

«and in the hereafter theirs will be a grievous punishment» namely hell and divine wrath.

«They eagerly listen to lies» – listening here means accepting and taking to heart, which is due to their lack of religious commitment and reason; hence they respond to the one who calls them to falsehood.

«and devour what is unlawful» that is, haram wealth, because of what they take unlawfully from their common folk of set fees and charges. Thus they combine following falsehood and consuming that which is prohibited.

«If they do come to you [O Muhammad], either judge between them or turn away from them» – it is your choice. This was not abrogated; rather if this type of people referred to him for judgement, he had the choice between judging between them or refraining from doing so, because they had no intention of adhering to the rule of Sharia, unless it was in accordance with their whims and desires.

Based on that, if it is known that the one who is asking a scholar for an Islamic verdict or for a judgement between him and his opponent will not accept it if the verdict is against him, then the scholar is not obliged to give a ruling or verdict, but if he does judge between them,

then he is obliged to judge fairly. Hence Allah says: ﴿If you turn away from them, not the least harm will they do to you, and if you judge, then judge with justice between them, for Allah loves those who are just﴾. Even if they are wrongdoers or enemies, that should not prevent you from being fair when judging between them.

This highlights the virtue of justice and fairness when judging between people, which Allah (ﷻ) loves. Then Allah says, expressing astonishment at their attitude: ﴿But how is it that they ask you for judgement when they have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement, and they still turn away? Such people are not [truly] believers﴾ – the reason being that if they were truly believers acting upon what faith requires, they would not have turned away from the judgement of Allah which is mentioned in the Torah that they have before them, in hope of finding a ruling that was in accordance with their whims and desires.

When you (O Prophet ﷺ) judged between them according to the ruling of Allah, which is also in accordance with what they have in their scriptures, they did not like it; rather they turned away from it and did not accept it.

﴿Such people﴾ that is, the ones who did this
 ﴿are not [truly] believers﴾ that is, this is not the way of the believers, and they do not deserve to be called believers, because they take as their gods their own desires (cf. 25: 43), and they regard the rulings of faith as being subject to their whims and desires.

﴿Verily We revealed the Torah﴾ to Moosâ ibn 'Imrân (ﷺ)
 ﴿in which was guidance﴾ as it guided people to faith and truth, and protected against misguidance
 ﴿and light﴾ to illuminate the darkness of ignorance, confusion, doubt, specious arguments, and whims and desires, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, We gave to Moosâ and Hâroon the criterion [between right and wrong – the Torah], and a light, and admonition for the pious.﴾
(al-Anbiyâ' 21: 48)

﴿By it the Prophets who submitted [to Allah]﴾ and complied with His commands, whose submission to Him was greater than that of others, and they were the elite chosen by Allah from among His slaves ﴿judged the Jews﴾ concerning cases of dispute and questions about religious rulings. If this is the case with regard to these noble Prophets and leaders of humankind, that they followed the teachings and guidance of the Torah, then what is preventing these ignoble people among the Jews from following it? What made them cast aside the noblest idea in it, namely believing in Muhammad (ﷺ), without belief in whom no deed, visible or hidden, is accepted? Did they have a leader in that (path of misguidance)? Yes, they had leaders whose main focus was to distort the text of the Torah and establish themselves as leaders among people, and to earn a living by concealing the truth and making falsehood manifest. These are the leaders of misguidance who called people to the fire.

﴿as did the rabbis and scholars﴾ that is, the religious leaders of the Jews ruled on the basis of the Torah. The word translated here as ﴿rabbis﴾ refers to knowledgeable people who act upon their knowledge and teach others in the best way, and they follow the path of the compassionate Prophets in their dealings with the people.

The word translated here as ﴿scholars﴾ refers to the senior scholars whose teachings people emulate and follow, and among their people they are known for devotion and sincerity.

This ruling on their part, which is in accordance with the truth, is because ﴿to them was entrusted the protection of the scripture of Allah, and they were witnesses thereto﴾ that is, because Allah entrusted the protection of His Book to them, and made them trustees in whose keeping it was placed, and He enjoined them to protect it

from additions, subtractions and concealment, and to teach it to those who do not know it.

Therefore they are witnesses over it, as they became the reference point regarding it and matters that were not clear in people's minds. Allah (ﷻ) gives responsibility to the people of knowledge that He does not give to those who are ignorant. Therefore they were required to shoulder that burden of responsibility and not to follow the example of the ignorant by resorting to idleness and laziness. Therefore they should not limit themselves to individual acts of worship, such as various kinds of dhikr, prayer, zakâh, Hajj, fasting and other matters by which, if those who have no knowledge do them, they will be fine and will be saved.

But in the case of those who have knowledge, just as they are required to fulfil their individual duties, they are also required to teach the people and point out to them that which they need to know of religious matters, especially the fundamental matters and issues that often arise. They should not fear people; rather they should fear their Lord. Hence He says: ﴿So do not fear people, but fear Me, and do not sell My revelations for a small price﴾, for then you would be concealing the truth and making falsehood manifest for the sake of insignificant worldly gain. If the scholar is free of these faults, then that is by the help and guidance of Allah and His blessing, because He has caused his focus to be on acquiring knowledge and teaching people, and he knows that Allah has entrusted to his keeping what he has of knowledge and is a witness thereto. So he should fear his Lord, and not let fear of people prevent him from doing what is required of him or give precedence to worldly matters over religious matters.

By the same token, the sign of a scholar being doomed is that he is content to be idle and not do anything, and he does not care about what he has been entrusted with. He neglects it for he has sold his religious commitment for worldly gain and taken bribes for his verdicts; thus he took money for his fatwas and did not teach the slaves of Allah anything unless it was in return for a fee.

Allah has blessed such a person immensely, but he was ungrateful for it and he rejected that great good fortune of which others are deprived. We ask Allah for beneficial knowledge and accepted deeds; may He bless us with pardon and protection from all calamities.

﴿And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed﴾ of clear truth, and he knowingly rules according to falsehood for some invalid purpose,
 ﴿such are disbelievers﴾. Judging or ruling according to something other than that which Allah has revealed is the action of the disbelievers, and it may put one beyond the pale of Islam, if he believes that doing so is permissible, or it may be a major sin and an act of disbelief, for which the one who does it deserves a severe punishment.



﴿وَكُنَيْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنْ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ
 وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ
 فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٤٥)

- 5:45. We ordained therein for them: A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and wounds equal for equal. But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it will be an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, such are wrongdoers.

These rulings are among the rulings mentioned in the Torah, the rulings by which the Prophets who submitted (to Allah) judged the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars. Allah enjoined upon them that a person – if he killed someone – was to be executed for that act of

murder – on condition that the act was deliberate. An eye was to be put out in retaliation for an eye, an ear was to be removed in retaliation for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and so on with regard to physical faculties for which retribution is possible without going to extremes.

﴿and wounds equal for equal﴾ – retribution means that the same is done to the perpetrator as he did to the victim. If a person wounds another deliberately, then retribution is exacted by inflicting a similar wound upon him, in the same location and of similar dimensions, as a hadd punishment. It should be noted that laws prescribed for the nations that came before us are also prescribed for us, unless Islamic Sharia ordains otherwise.

﴿But if anyone remits the retaliation﴾ in cases of murder or lesser offences causing loss of physical faculties or wounds, by forgiving the one who committed the offence

﴿it will be an expiation for him﴾ that is, expiation for the offender, because the human has waived his rights, and it is more befitting that Allah should waive what is due to Him. It is also expiation for the one who remits it; just as he pardoned a transgression against him or against his next of kin, Allah will pardon his mistakes and offences.

﴿And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, such are wrongdoers﴾. Ibn 'Abbâs said:

[That is,] a lesser form of disbelief, a lesser form of wrongdoing and a lesser form of evildoing. The wrongdoing is greater if the perpetrator regards it as permissible, and it is a major sin if he does it without thinking that it is permissible.



﴿وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۖ وَإِتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۖ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۖ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَيَحْكُمَ أَهْلُ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٤٦-٤٧)

- 5:46. And in their footsteps We sent 'Eesâ son of Maryam, confirming what came before him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light, and confirmation of what came before it of the Torah; a guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah.
- 5:47. Let the people of the Gospel judge according to what Allah revealed therein. And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, such are evildoers.

That is, We followed the sending of these Prophets and Messengers, who judged in accordance with the Torah, by sending Our slave and Messenger 'Eesâ ibn Maryam, a soul created by Allah and His word that He bestowed upon Maryam. Allah sent him to confirm what came before him of the Torah. So he was a witness who testified in favour of Moosâ and what he brought of the Torah, in truth. He supported his call and judged in accordance with his laws, agreeing and concurring with him in most legal matters.

'Eesâ (ﷺ) may have been more lenient with regard to some rulings, as Allah (ﷻ) tells us that he said to the Children of Israel:

﴿[I have come] to confirm that which came before me of the Torah, and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you...﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 50)

﴿and We gave him the Gospel﴾, the great Book which complemented the Torah

﴿in which was guidance and light﴾, to guide people to the straight path and distinguish truth from falsehood

﴿and confirmation of what came before it of the Torah﴾ by confirming it, testifying for it and agreeing with it

«a guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah» for they are the ones who benefit from guidance, pay heed to admonition and are deterred from that which is not appropriate.

«Let the people of the Gospel judge according to what Allah revealed therein» that is, it is obligatory for them to adhere to their scripture, and it is not permissible for them to turn away from it
«And whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, such are evildoers».



﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَأِنْ أَحْكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ يَرِيذُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَصِيبَهُمْ بَعْضُ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنْ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٤٨-٥٠)

- 5:48. And We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it and superseding it. So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires by turning away from the truth that has come to you. To each [community] among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single community, but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you in what He has given you. So hasten to do good deeds. To Allah you will all return, then

He will inform you about the matters concerning which you differed.

5:49. So judge [O Muhammad] between them according to what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires; but beware lest they lure you away from any part of that which Allah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, then know that it is Allah's will to punish them for some of their sins. And verily many people are indeed rebellious.

5:50. Is it then the judgement of [the times of] ignorance²³ that they seek? But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?

﴿And We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book﴾ namely the Holy Qur'an, the best and greatest of scriptures ﴿in truth﴾ that is, revealed in truth and containing truth in its stories, commands and prohibitions ﴿confirming the scripture that came before it﴾ because it testifies for it and is in harmony with it; its stories match and its major laws are the same. The previous scriptures foretold it, so the existence of the Qur'an is a confirmation of the previous scriptures

﴿and superseding it﴾ that is, it includes what the previous scriptures contained, and with regard to additional divine instructions and promotion of good morals and attitudes, it is the Book which contains everything true that was mentioned and enjoined in previous scriptures; it approached the same issues from different angles.

It is the Book which contains news of the earlier and later generations. It is the Book which contains judgement, wisdom and rulings; the Book by which all previous scriptures are judged. Whatever it testifies is true is to be accepted, and whatever it testifies is false is to be rejected, as it has been affected by distortion and alteration,

²³ Jāhiliyah (the times of ignorance): this refers to the period before Islam.

otherwise if it were really from Allah, it would not contradict what is in the Qur'an.

﴿So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed﴾ that is, the rules of Sharia that Allah has revealed to you.

﴿and do not follow their desires by turning away from the truth that has come to you﴾ that is, do not follow their corrupt whims and desires that are contrary to the truth, instead of the truth that has come to you, thus exchanging what is better for what is inferior

﴿To each [community] among you﴾, O nations, ﴿We have prescribed a law and a clear way﴾ or path. This refers to sets of laws that differ from one nation to another, according to changes in times and circumstances, but all of them were based on fairness at the time when they were ordained. As for the basic principles which are in people's best interests and based on wisdom at all times, they do not change; thus you find them prescribed in all sets of laws.

﴿If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single community﴾, following one set of laws, and the laws that came later would not differ from those that came earlier.

﴿but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you in what He has given you﴾. So He tests you to see what you will do, and He tests each nation according to what His wisdom dictates, giving each one whatever is appropriate for it. He also tests them so as to bring about competition between the nations, for each nation will be keen to compete with others and surpass them. Hence Allah says: ﴿So hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, hasten to do them properly. ﴿good deeds﴾ include every deed that is obligatory or recommended, whether it pertains to the rights of Allah or those of His slaves. The one who does them is not regarded as being ahead of others unless he does two things: hastening to do the good deed, making the most of the opportunity when the time for it comes and it is due, and striving hard to do it properly as enjoined. This verse indicates that the individual should hasten to offer the prayer and do other deeds when the time for

them begins, and that he should not limit himself only to that which makes the deed acceptable in the case of prayer and other obligatory acts of worship; rather he should strive to do whatever he is able to of all actions that are recommended, so as to complete and perfect his deeds and attain the position of being ahead of others.

﴿To Allah you will all return﴾ – the earlier and later nations; Allah will gather them together on a day concerning which there is no doubt ﴿then He will inform you about the matters concerning which you differed﴾ of laws and deeds. Then He will reward those who followed the truth and did righteous deeds, and He will punish those who followed falsehood and did evil deeds.

﴿So judge [O Muhammad] between them according to what Allah has revealed﴾. It was said that this verse abrogates the verse in which Allah says: ﴿either judge between them or turn away from them﴾ (5: 42).

However the correct view is that it does not abrogate it, and that this verse indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) did have the choice between judging between them and not doing so; that was because their intention was not to seek a fair and truth-based judgement.

This verse indicates that if he did judge between them, then he was to judge between them in accordance with what Allah had sent down of the Book and the Sunnah. This is the justice that Allah previously referred to: ﴿and if you judge, then judge with justice between them﴾ (5: 42). This indicates that what is meant by justice, and the basis thereof, is that which Allah has ordained of rulings. This includes the utmost justice and fairness, and anything contrary to that is unjust and unfair.

﴿and do not follow their desires﴾. This prohibition on following their whims and desires is repeated so as to emphasise the warning against doing so. The first time this phrase appears is in the context of giving a ruling and verdict, which is broader in scope; here it appears

in the context of giving rulings only. In either case it is essential to avoid following their whims and desires that are contrary to the truth. Hence Allah says: ﴿but beware lest they lure you away from any part of that which Allah has sent down to you﴾ that is, beware of being deceived by them, lest they confuse you and make you turn away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you, in which case following their whims and desires would be a cause that led to your abandoning the truth that must be followed.

﴿And if they turn away﴾ from following you and following the truth

﴿then know﴾ that this is a punishment to them, and that it is Allah's will ﴿to punish them for some of their sins﴾. There are punishments for sin in this world and in the hereafter; one of the harshest of punishments is when it becomes fair-seeming to stop following the Messenger (ﷺ). This is because of the individual's sin, ﴿And verily many people are indeed rebellious﴾ that is, their nature is to rebel and to refuse to obey Allah or follow His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿Is it then the judgement of [the times of] ignorance²⁴ that they seek?﴾ That is, by turning away and objecting to you, are they seeking the judgement of the times of ignorance, which refers to any ruling that is contrary to that which Allah sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ). There is nothing but either the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) or the ruling of the times of ignorance. Whoever turns away from the former will fall into the latter, which is based on ignorance, injustice and transgression. Hence Allah described it as ignorance. As for the ruling of Allah (ﷻ), it is based on knowledge, justice, fairness, light and guidance.

﴿But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?﴾ The one who is certain in faith is the one who knows the difference between the two types of judgement and

²⁴ Jāhiliyah (the times of ignorance) this refers to the period before Islam.

recognises – on the basis of his certain faith – the beauty and brilliance of Allah's judgement, and he knows that it is obligatory – on the basis of reason and Islamic teachings – to follow it. Certainty of faith is based on perfect knowledge that prompts one to act upon it.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ۚ فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِندِهِ ۖ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥١-٥٣)

- 5:51. O you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies;²⁵ for they are allies of one another. Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.
- 5:52. You see those in whose hearts is a disease hastening towards them, saying: We are afraid lest fortune turn against us. It may be that Allah will bring about victory or some other event by His decree. Then they will regret what they had kept hidden in their hearts.
- 5:53. And those who believe say: Are these the men who swore their most solemn oaths by Allah, that they were with you? Their deeds have come to nothing and they find themselves losers.

²⁵ The word *awliyā'*, translated here as "allies", may also mean protectors, supporters, close friends, and so on.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves, when He describes to them the situation of the Jews and the Christians, and their displeasing attributes, that they should not take them as allies, for they are allies of one another, who support one another and are united against others. You should not take them as allies, for in fact they are enemies who do not care what befalls you. Rather they would not spare any effort to mislead you. Hence no one takes them as allies except one who is like them. For this reason, Allah says: ﴿Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them﴾, because taking them as allies, in a complete sense, dictates joining them in their religion, and taking them as allies on a small scale could lead to taking them as allies on a large scale, then the individual would get closer to them, step-by-step, until he becomes one of them.

﴿Verily Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people﴾ that is, those who have the quality of wrongdoing, for whom it is second nature. Even if you brought all signs to them, they would not follow you.

When Allah instructed the believers not to take them as allies, He stated that among some of those who claim to be believers there is a group that takes the enemy as allies. Allah says:

﴿You see those in whose hearts is a disease﴾ such as doubt, hypocrisy and weakness of faith. They say: We take them as allies now because we may have need of them

﴿We are afraid lest fortune turn against us﴾ that is, in case things go in favour of the Jews and Christians, for if they have the upper hand, and we are already on good terms with them, they will reward us for that. This is negative thinking of Islam on their part. Allah says in response to their negative thinking:

﴿It may be that Allah will bring about victory﴾ that is, Allah may cause Islam to prevail over the Jews and Christians, so that the Muslims will defeat them

﴿or some other event by His decree﴾ that would lead to the hypocrites despairing of the disbelievers – be they Jews or others – ever prevailing

«Then they will regret what they had kept hidden» that is, concealed «in their hearts»; they will regret what they did and the harm they caused, but it will be to no benefit. The victory that Allah granted to Islam and the Muslims came to pass and disbelief and the disbelievers were brought low; as a result they were filled with regret and sorrow to an extent that only Allah knows.

«And those who believe say» in astonishment at the state of these people in whose hearts there is sickness: «Are these the men who swore their most solemn oaths by Allah, that they were with you?» That is: they swore solemnly and went to extremes in trying to give assurances that they were your fellow believers with all that that implies of support, love and friendship.

But what they were concealing was made manifest and their plot and what they intended to do to Islam and its followers came to nothing; thus their plot was foiled and «their deeds» were rendered invalid in this world and «they find themselves losers» as they failed to attain their goal and will have no escape from misery and punishment.



﴿يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْ رِثَّةٍ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥٤)

- 5:54. O you who believe, whoever among you renounces his faith, Allah will bring forth [in their stead] people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers and stern towards the disbelievers, striving in the cause of Allah, and not fearing the reproach of any reproacher. That is the grace of Allah, which He bestows upon whomever He will. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He has no need of His creation, and that whoever apostatises from His religion will never harm Him at all; rather he only harms himself. Allah has sincere slaves whom the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful has guaranteed to guide and has promised that He will bring forth, and that they will be the most perfect of humanity in characteristics, the strongest at heart and the best in attitude. The greatest of their characteristics is that Allah loves them and they love Him. Allah's love for a person is the greatest blessing that He may bestow upon him, and the greatest virtue with which Allah may favour him. If Allah loves a person, He makes things easy for him and enables him to do good deeds and refrain from evil deeds; He also causes His slaves to love that person.

One of the requirements of a person's love for his Lord is that he has no choice but to follow the Messenger (ﷺ) both outwardly and inwardly, in word and deed, in all circumstances, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Say: If you love Allah then follow me; Allah will love you...﴾ (*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 31)

One of the prerequisites of Allah loving a person is that he does a lot of deeds to draw near to Allah, both obligatory and supererogatory actions, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the ṣaḥeeḥ hadith which tells us that Allah says:

«My slave does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than what which I have enjoined upon him (of obligatory duties), and My slave continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds so that I will love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.» (Bukhari)

Another of the prerequisites of Allah loving a person is knowing Him and remembering Him a great deal, for love without knowing

Allah is sorely lacking; indeed it is non-existent, even if one claims that it is there. The one who loves Allah remembers Him a great deal, and when Allah loves a person, He will accept a little of good deeds from him and will forgive a great deal of mistakes on his part.

Another of their characteristics is that they are humble towards the believers and stern towards the disbelievers. With the believers, they are humble out of love, sincerity, gentleness, kindness, compassion and mercy towards them, and they are easy going with them. But with those who disbelieve in Allah, stubbornly reject His revelations and disbelieve in His Messengers, they are stern and resolved to oppose them and to do their utmost by all available means to prevail over them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Make ready against them all that you can of [military] power and steeds of war, to strike fear into the hearts of the enemies of Allah and your enemies...﴾ (*al-Anfāl* 8: 60)

– and:

﴿...firm and unyielding towards the disbelievers, compassionate towards one another...﴾ (*al-Fath* 48: 29)

Being forceful and stern against the enemies of Allah is something that brings one nearer to Allah and is a means by which the person is in harmony with his Lord in His wrath towards them. The idea of being stern towards them does not mean that we cannot call them to Islam in the manner that is best, thus combining sternness towards them with gentleness in calling them to Islam. Both are in their best interests and will benefit them.

﴿striving in the cause of Allah﴾, offering their wealth and their lives, striving in word and deed

﴿and not fearing the reproach of any reproacher﴾; rather they give precedence to pleasing their Lord and fearing His disapproval over fearing the reproach of other people. This is indicative of the strength of their aspirations and resolve, for weakness of heart and lack of resolve when faced with reproach weaken one's resolve further

and lead to him losing strength when he is told off; that is a kind of servitude to something other than Allah, the degree of which is commensurate with the extent to which they pay attention to other people and give precedence to pleasing them and avoiding their reproach over complying with the command of Allah. A person's heart is not free of servitude to anyone other than Allah until he reaches a point where he does not fear the reproach of any reproacher for the sake of Allah.

Having praised them for that which He blessed them with of noble and sublime characteristics, which are indicative of righteous deeds not mentioned, Allah then tells us that this is by His grace and kindness towards them, lest they be filled with self-admiration and so that they will give thanks to the One Who blessed them with that. Furthermore, He will bestow more of His grace upon them and others will understand that there is no barrier to the grace of Allah (ﷻ):

﴿That is the grace of Allah, which He bestows upon whomever He will. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing﴾ that is, He is abundant in grace and kindness, and bestows immense blessings. His mercy encompasses all things and He gives abundantly to His close friends in a way that He does not give to others. He knows best who is deserving of grace, and He gives it to him.

﴿Allah knows best where to place His message﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 124)

– in terms of the Messengers and those who convey the message from them.



﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥٥)

- 5:55. Your only allies are Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, those who establish prayer and give zakāh, with humble submission.
- 5:56. Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as allies, it is the party of Allah that will certainly be triumphant.

Having forbidden us to take the disbelievers – Jews, Christians and others – as allies and stated that the ultimate fate of those who take them as allies is clear loss, Allah (ﷻ) then tells us who the believers should take as allies, and He mentions the benefits and interests served by doing so:

﴿Your only allies are Allah, His Messenger﴾ – taking Allah as an ally means believing in Him and fearing Him. Everyone who believes and fears Allah is an ally of His, and whoever is an ally of Allah is also an ally of His Messenger (ﷺ). A result of that is taking as an ally everyone who takes Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) as allies, namely the believers who establish faith both outwardly and inwardly, and show sincere devotion to Allah by establishing prayer, fulfilling all its conditions and doing all obligatory and optional parts thereof, treating people kindly and giving zakāh from their wealth to those among them who are entitled to it.

﴿with humble submission﴾ that is, they are humble towards Allah

The word ﴿only﴾ in the phrase ﴿Your only allies are Allah, His Messenger, and the believers﴾ indicates that being an ally only to those mentioned, and disavowing any alliance to anyone else, is obligatory.

Then Allah mentions the benefit of this alliance: ﴿Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as allies, it is the party of Allah that will certainly be triumphant﴾ that is, he belongs to the party that is described as belonging to Allah by way of servitude and alliance, and His party is the one which will prevail, and for whom

there will be a good end in this world and in the hereafter, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿And it is surely Our troops who will be the victors.﴾ (as-Saffât 37: 173)

These are glad tidings for anyone who follows the command of Allah and becomes one of His party and those who support His cause: that he will prevail, even if he is defeated sometimes for a reason that Allah (ﷻ) wills. Ultimately he will prevail and be victorious, for who could be truer in his promise than Allah?



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِرَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّكُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥٧-٥٨)

5:57. O you who believe, do not take as allies²⁶ those who ridicule your religion and make fun of it, whether they are among those who were given the scripture before you or the disbelievers. Fear Allah, if you are [truly] believers.

5:58. When you give the call to prayer, they ridicule it and make fun of it; that is because they are a people who do not understand.

Here Allah forbids His believing slaves to take as allies the People of the Book, namely the Jews and Christians, and all other disbelievers, loving them, regarding them as friends, disclosing the secrets of the believers to them and helping them in some of their affairs that will adversely affect Islam and the Muslims. The faith that the believers

²⁶ The word *awliyâ'*, translated here as "allies", may also mean protectors, supporters, close friends, and so on.

have dictates that they should not take them as allies and it encourages them to regard them as enemies.

Similarly, their duty to fear Allah, which means complying with His commands and avoiding that which He prohibits, requires them to regard them as enemies.

There were also other polytheists and disbelievers who opposed the Muslims, attacking their religion, making fun of it, belittling it and looking down on it, especially the prayer which is the most prominent characteristic of the Muslims and the noblest of their acts of worship. When the Muslims gave the call to prayer, they mocked it because of their immaturity and great ignorance. Otherwise, if they were possessed of any reason, they would have submitted to it and would have realised that it is better than all righteous deeds that a person could do.

If you – O believers – realise how the disbelievers really are and the extent of their hostility towards you and your religion, then anyone who does not resent and oppose them does not truly appreciate Islam.

How can you claim that you have a good religion, and that it is the religion of truth and all others are false, yet you accept to take as allies those foolish and ignorant people who make fun of Islam and mock it and its people? This comes under the heading of inciting enmity towards their enemies, which is very clear to anyone who has the slightest understanding.



﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ هَلْ تَتَّقُوْنَ مِّنَا اِلَّا اَنْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَمَا اُنْزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَاَنْ اَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُوْنَ ۝٥٩ قُلْ هَلْ اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ ذٰلِكَ مَثُوْبَةٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ مَن لَعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْفِرْدَۃَ وَالْخٰنٰزِرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ اُوْلٰٓئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاۤءِ السَّبِيْلِ ۝٦٠ وَاِذَا جَآءُوكُمْ قَالُوْا ءَامَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوْا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوْا بِهٖ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي آلَائِهِمُ الْعُدُونَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ لَيْسَ
 مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَوْلَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبُّنِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِنَّمَا أَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ
 لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥٩-٦٣)

- 5:59. Say: O People of the Book, do you resent us for any reason other than that we believe in Allah, and in [the revelation] that has been sent down to us, and in that which was sent down before, and that most of you are evildoers?
- 5:60. Say: Shall I tell you who deserves a worse recompense from Allah [than that which you think we will receive]? Those whom Allah cursed and was angry with, some of whom He turned into apes and swine, and worshippers of false gods. They are in a worse position and are further astray from the right path.
- 5:61. And when they come to you, they say: We believe, but in fact they come with disbelief [in their hearts] and they depart with disbelief, and Allah knows all that they conceal [in their hearts].
- 5:62. You see many of them rushing into sin and transgression, and devouring unlawful earnings. Wretched indeed is what they have been doing.
- 5:63. Why do the rabbis and scholars not forbid them to utter sinful words and devour unlawful earnings? Wretched indeed is what they have been failing to do.²⁷

That is: ﴿Say﴾ O Messenger (ﷺ): ﴿O People of the Book﴾ affirming to them that Islam is the true religion and that their criticism of it is criticising something that should be praised.

﴿do you resent us for any reason other than that we believe in Allah, and in [the revelation] that has been sent down to us, and in that which was sent down before, and that most of you are evildoers?﴾ That is, do you have anything against us except the fact that we believe in

²⁷ That is, by not forbidding them to do those things.

Allah and in His earlier and later Books, and His earlier and later Prophets, and that we are certain that whoever does not believe in this manner is a disbeliever and an evildoer? Do you resent us for any reason other than that we believe in this which is the most obligatory duty of all who are accountable?

Most of them are evildoers; that is, they fail to obey Allah and they blatantly disobey Him.

Because their criticism of the believers implies that they think that they are following an evil path, Allah (ﷻ) says: «Say» to them, informing them of the abhorrent nature of what they follow:

«Shall I tell you who deserves a worse recompense from Allah [than that which you think we will receive]?» that is, worse than that for which you resent us – this is said for argument's sake.

«Those whom Allah cursed» that is, cast far away from His mercy «and was angry with» and punished them in this world and the hereafter

«some of whom He turned into apes and swine, and worshippers of false gods» – the word *ṭāghoot*, translated here as «false gods», refers to the *Shayṭān*. Everything that is worshipped instead of Allah is *ṭāghoot*.

«They» that is, those who are mentioned as having these reprehensible characteristics

«are in a worse position» than the believers to whom the mercy of Allah is near, and Allah is pleased with them and rewards them in this world and in the hereafter, because they are sincere in their devotion to Him. This is a kind of comparison, without inferring that both are bad. «and are further astray from the right path» that is, they are far away from the straight path.

«And when they come to you, they say: We believe» by way of hypocrisy and trickery

«but in fact they come with disbelief [in their hearts] and they depart with disbelief» that is, they come and go with disbelief in their hearts

even though they claim to be believers; can there be anyone worse than these people or in a more appalling state?

﴿and Allah knows all that they conceal [in their hearts]﴾ and He will requite them for their deeds, both good and evil.

Then Allah (ﷻ) carries on listing their faults, in retaliation for their criticism of His believing slaves: ﴿You see many of them﴾ that is, the Jews ﴿rushing into sin and transgression﴾ that is, they are eager and hasten to commit sins that have to do with the rights of the Creator and transgression against other people.

﴿and devouring unlawful earnings﴾ that is, what is haram. Allah did not stop at telling us that they do this; rather He tells us that they rush into it, which is indicative of their evil, and shows us that it is second nature to them to love sin and wrongdoing, yet they claim for themselves a high status.

﴿Wretched indeed is what they have been doing﴾ – this is the utmost criticism and condemnation of them.

﴿Why do the rabbis and scholars not forbid them to utter sinful words and devour unlawful earnings?﴾ That is, why do the scholars – who take it upon themselves to benefit the people and whom Allah has blessed with knowledge and wisdom – not forbid them to do those sins that come from them, so that the people will rid themselves of ignorance and proof will be established against them?

The scholars are obliged to enjoin upon people what is right and to forbid what is wrong, to show the people the right path, encourage them to do all that is good and warn them against all that is evil.

﴿Wretched indeed is what they have been failing to do﴾.



﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلَيزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ۖ وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ

وَالْبَعْضَاءُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْفَيْصَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَسَعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا
عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُقْتَصِدَةٌ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦٤-٦٦)

- 5:64. The Jews say: Allah's Hand is tied up. May their hands be tied up and may they be cursed for what they say. Rather His two Hands are outstretched; He bestows [His bounty] as He wills. The [revelation] that has come down to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in obstinate rebellion and disbelief, and We have cast among them enmity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it. They strive to spread mischief in the land, and Allah does not love those who spread mischief.
- 5:65. If the People of the Book had believed and feared Allah, We would surely have expiated their sins from them, and admitted them to gardens of delight.
- 5:66. If they had been steadfast [in adhering to] the Torah and the Gospel, and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would surely have been given provision from above them and from beneath their feet. Among them are some who are fair-minded, but many of them do evil deeds.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the abhorrent words of the Jews and their dreadful belief:

«The Jews say: Allah's Hand is tied up» that is, unable to do good and bestow kindness.

«May their hands be tied up and may they be cursed for what they say». This is a supplication against them of similar nature to what they said, because their words implicitly describe Allah, the Most

Generous, as being miserly and not kind. Hence He requited them by making this description suit them.

They were the most miserly of people and the least generous and kind, and they thought of Allah in the most negative terms. Therefore He cast them far away from His mercy which encompasses all things and reaches all regions of the upper and lower realms. Hence He said: «Rather His two Hands are outstretched; He bestows [His bounty] as He wills», with no restrictions on Him and no impediment to prevent Him doing what He wills. His generosity is far reaching and His kindness encompasses the spiritual and the physical. He enjoins His slaves to make the most of the seasons when He bestows His grace abundantly and not to close to themselves the gates of His kindness by committing sin.

His Hands are giving by night and by day, and His bounty pours forth abundantly at all times, relieving distress, removing hardship, enriching the poor, ransoming the captive, consoling the afflicted, giving to those who are in need, answering the cry of the desperate, responding to those who ask, bestowing blessings even upon those who do not ask, granting well-being to those who seek it and never depriving any sinner of His bounty. Indeed His bounty is enjoyed by righteous and evildoers alike, but He shows further kindness to His close friends by helping them to do righteous deeds. Then He praises them and attributes their righteous deeds to them, by His grace, and He rewards them for those deeds in this world and in the hereafter, a reward that cannot be described and has not crossed the mind of man. He takes care of them in all their affairs, bestows His blessings upon them and wards off harm from them, much of which they are unaware of. Glory be to the One from Whom all blessings come and to Whom they turn to ward off harm. Blessed be the One Whom no one can praise as He deserves; rather He is as He has praised Himself. Exalted be the One of Whose generosity people are never deprived,

not even for the blink of an eye; rather they cannot exist or survive except by His grace.

May Allah doom the one who in his ignorance thinks that he can do without his Lord and who ascribes to Him that which is not befitting to His Majesty. Rather if Allah were to take to task the Jews who said that or others of their ilk, for some of what they say, they would have been destroyed and doomed in this world. But they say these things, and Allah (ﷻ) shows forbearance, overlooks and gives respite, but He never forgets about them.

﴿The [revelation] that has come down to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in obstinate rebellion and disbelief﴾. This is the worst punishment that may befall a person, whereby the message that Allah has sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ), which brings life to the heart and soul, and brings happiness in this world and the hereafter, and success in both realms, which is the greatest blessing that Allah has bestowed upon His slaves, that they should hasten to accept and submit to Allah by doing so, and give thanks to Allah for it – that such a thing could increase them in transgression, obstinate rebellion and disbelief. That is because of their turning away from it, rejecting it, stubbornly opposing it and producing false arguments to undermine it.

﴿and We have cast among them enmity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection﴾ so there will be no harmony among them, they will not support one another, and they will not agree on any issue that serves any of their interests; rather they will bear mutual grudges in their hearts and oppose one another until the Day of Resurrection.

﴿Every time they kindle the fire of war﴾ to attack Islam and its people, or they start something or try to repeat it, and they amass their military power, ﴿Allah extinguishes it﴾ by causing them to fail, causing their troops to scatter and granting the Muslims victory over them.

«They strive to spread mischief in the land» that is, they try hard and do their utmost, but by spreading mischief in the land they are committing sin and promoting their false religion, and preventing people from entering Islam.

«and Allah does not love those who spread mischief»; rather He hates them intensely and will requite them for that.

«If the People of the Book had believed and feared Allah, We would surely have expiated their sins from them, and admitted them to gardens of delight». This is by His grace and bounty; having mentioned the evil deeds, faults and false arguments of the People of the Book, He calls them to repent, and tells them that if they believe in Allah, His angels, all of His Books and all of His Messengers, and avoid sin, their bad deeds will be expiated, no matter what they are, and He would admit them to gardens of delight, where there will be all that their souls could desire, all that their eyes could delight in (*cf.* 43: 71).

«If they had been steadfast [in adhering to] the Torah and the Gospel, and that which was revealed to them from their Lord» that is, if they had adhered to the commands and prohibitions contained therein, as Allah instructed them and urged them to do, part of which is believing in Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an – if they had been steadfast in adhering to this great blessing which their Lord had revealed to them for their sakes and for their own benefit,

«they would surely have been given provision from above them and from beneath their feet» that is, Allah would have sent abundant provision to them; He would have sent down rain upon them and brought forth vegetation for them from the earth, as He says elsewhere:

«If only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allah, We would indeed have opened up for them blessings from heaven and earth...» (*al-A'râf* 7: 96)

«Among them» that is, among the People of the Book

﴿are some who are fair-minded﴾ that is, they act in accordance with the Torah and Gospel

﴿but many of them do evil deeds﴾ that is, the evildoers among them are many; as for those who strive to adhere to the teachings, how few they are.



﴿يَأَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ مَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦٧)

5:67. O Messenger, convey all that has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not do that, you will not have conveyed it [at all]. Allah will protect you from humankind. Verily Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

This is a command from Allah to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), the greatest and most significant of His commands, which is to convey that which Allah sent down to him. That includes everything that the Ummah learned from him of beliefs, deeds, words, shar'i rulings and other divine injunctions. He conveyed it in the most perfect manner; he called people, warned them, give them glad tidings, made things easy and taught the ignorant and unlettered, until they became learned scholars. He conveyed the message through his words, deeds, letters and envoys. He did not omit anything good but he told his Ummah about it, and he did not leave anything evil but he warned them against it. The most prominent figures among his Ummah testified to his having conveyed the message, among his Companions and, after them, from among the leading scholars of the faith, and the Muslims in general.

﴿If you do not do that﴾ that is, if you do not convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord,

﴿you will not have conveyed it [at all]﴾ that is, you will not have complied with His command.

﴿Allah will protect you from humankind﴾ – this is protection against people granted by Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ), so you should be keen to teach and convey the message, and you should not be deterred by fear of some people, for their forelocks are in the Hand of Allah (that is, He has full control over them) and He has guaranteed to protect you. So all you have to do is convey the message clearly, then whoever is guided, it is for his own benefit. As for the disbelievers whose only aim is to follow their whims and desires, Allah will not guide them or help them to do good, because of their disbelief.



﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَآبِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا ٱلتَّوْرَةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦٨)

5:68. Say: O People of the Book, you have naught [of guidance] unless you are steadfast [in adhering to] the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed to you from your Lord. The [revelation] that has come down to you [O Muhammad] from your Lord will surely increase many of them in obstinate rebellion and disbelief. So do not grieve over these disbelieving people.

That is, say to the People of the Book, declaring their misguidance and highlighting their falsehood: ﴿you have naught [of guidance]﴾ that is, you have nothing of religious teachings, for you do not believe in the Qur'an or Muhammad (ﷺ), and you do not adhere to any truth, and you have no foundation on which to base your arguments

﴿unless you are steadfast [in adhering to] the Torah and the Gospel﴾ that is, unless you adhere to them by believing in them and following them, and following everything to which they call you ﴿and﴾ in adhering to ﴿that which was revealed to you from your Lord﴾ Who is taking care of you and has blessed you, and has made the greatest blessing the sending down of scriptures to you. So what you should do is give thanks to Allah, adhere to the rulings of Allah and fulfil the trust and covenant that Allah has given you.

﴿The [revelation] that has come down to you [O Muhammad] from your Lord will surely increase many of them in obstinate rebellion and disbelief. So do not grieve over these disbelieving people.﴾



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مَنْ ءَامَرَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦٩)

- 5:69. Those who believe [in the Prophet (ﷺ)], and those who are Jews, and the Sabians and the Christians, whoever [among them] believed in Allah and the Last Day, and did righteous deeds, will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the People of the Book, the followers of the Qur'an, Torah and Gospel, that their happiness and salvation is by following one path and one principle, which is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and to do righteous deeds. Whoever among them believes in Allah and the Last Day, and does righteous deeds, will be saved and will have no fear of what they will face in the future of frightening matters, nor will they grieve for what they have left behind. This ruling is applicable to all times.



﴿لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ رُسُلًا كُلَّمَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ
بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَحَسِبُوا أَنَّا لَنَكُونَ
فِتْنَةً فَعَمُوا وَصَمُوا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُوا وَصَمُوا كَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧٠-٧١)

- 5:70. We took the covenant of the Children of Israel, and sent Messengers to them. But whenever there came to them a Messenger with something that was not in accordance with their desires, some they disbelieved, and others they killed.
- 5:71. They thought there would be no punishment, so they became blind and deaf [to the truth]. Then Allah turned to them in mercy, but then again many of them became blind and deaf. And Allah sees well all that they do.

﴿We took the covenant of the Children of Israel﴾ that is, their solemn pledge to believe in Allah and carry out their duties to Him, as mentioned above (in 5: 12 onwards): ﴿Allah took a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We appointed twelve leaders from among them...﴾.

﴿and sent Messengers to them﴾ coming one after another with the call of truth, to lead them in the way of guidance. But that was to no avail and was of no benefit, because ﴿whenever there came to them a Messenger with something﴾ of the truth ﴿that was not in accordance with their desires﴾, they disbelieved him and stubbornly rejected it, and they treated the Messenger (ﷺ) in the worst manner.

﴿some they disbelieved, and others they killed. They thought there would be no punishment﴾ that is, they thought that their sin and rejection would not incur any punishment or consequences, and they persisted in their falsehood

﴿so they became blind and deaf [to the truth]. Then﴾ Allah showed them grace and ﴿turned to them in mercy﴾ when they repented to Him ﴿but then﴾ they did not continue in that path; rather most of them turned back to their reprehensible ways, when ﴿again many of them became blind and deaf﴾, and few of them persisted in their repentance and faith.

﴿And Allah sees well all that they do﴾ and He will requite each person for his deeds; if they were good then he will be rewarded and if they were evil then he will be punished.



﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنِي
إِسْرَءِيلَ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا
يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَاكُلَانِ
الطَّعَامَ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ أَنِّي يُؤْفَكُونَ

﴿٧٥﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧٢-٧٥)

- 5:72. They indeed have disbelieved who say that Allah is the Messiah, the son of Maryam. But the Messiah said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Whoever ascribes partners to Allah, then Allah has forbidden paradise for him, and the fire will be his abode. For the wrongdoers there will be no helpers.

- 5:73. They indeed have disbelieved who say that Allah is one of three, for there is no god except One God. If they do not desist from what they say, a painful punishment will certainly befall those of them who disbelieve.
- 5:74. Will they not then turn to Allah in repentance and seek His forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
- 5:75. The Messiah son of Maryam was no more than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him. His mother was a woman strong and true in faith, and they both ate food. See how We make Our signs clear to them, then see how they are turned away [from the truth]!

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the disbelief of the Christians when they said ﴿that Allah is the Messiah, the son of Maryam﴾ on the basis of the specious argument that he came from a mother without a father, and thus was born in a manner different from the regular ordained manner decreed by Allah.

In fact 'Eesā (ﷺ) rejected this claim when he said to them: ﴿O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord﴾. Thus he affirmed his own total servitude and confirmed that his Lord is the Lord of all created beings.

﴿Whoever ascribes partners to Allah﴾ that is, associated any created being, 'Eesā or anyone else, with Allah, ﴿then Allah has forbidden paradise for him, and the fire will be his abode﴾. That is because he has regarded the creation as being equal with the Creator and he has diverted the purpose for which Allah created him – which is worship of Allah alone – to one who is not deserving of it, and thus he deserves to abide in hell for eternity.

﴿For the wrongdoers there will be no helpers﴾ to save them from the punishment of Allah or to ward off from them some of that which will befall them.

﴿They indeed have disbelieved who say that Allah is one of three﴾ this is the view of the Manşoor Christian group, who said that God was one of three: God, Jesus and Mary. Exalted be Allah far above what they say.

This is the greatest evidence of the Christians' lack of reason. How could they accept this abhorrent belief? How could they confuse the Creator with His creation? How could it not be clear to them who is the Lord of the worlds?

Allah (ﷻ) says, refuting them and their ilk: ﴿for there is no god except One God﴾ Who possesses all the attributes of perfection and is far above any shortcomings; He alone possesses the power of creation and control, for people have no blessing except from Him. So how can it be believed that there is another god besides Him? Exalted be Allah far above what the wrongdoers say.

Then He warns them: ﴿If they do not desist from what they say, a painful punishment will certainly befall those of them who disbelieve﴾; then He calls them to repent from what they have said, and He states clearly that He accepts repentance from His slaves: ﴿Will they not then turn to Allah﴾ that is, will they not turn back to that which He loves and is pleased with, namely affirming the oneness of Allah and affirming that 'Eesâ is the slave and Messenger of Allah, and turn away from what they say?

﴿and seek His forgiveness﴾ from what they have done ﴿For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He forgives the sins of the penitent, even if they were to reach the clouds of the sky, and He bestows mercy upon them by accepting their repentance and replacing their bad deeds with good deeds.

The call to repentance begins with a very gentle approach, as Allah says: ﴿Will they not then turn to Allah in repentance...?﴾

Then He mentions the reality of the Messiah and his mother, which is the truth, as He says: ﴿The Messiah son of Maryam was no more

than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him» that is, this is the most that may be said concerning him, that He was one of the slaves of Allah, one of those who were sent as Messengers, who had no power to introduce commands or laws, except those with which Allah sent them. He is just like the Messengers who came before him, with no advantage over them that would put him beyond the human level and make him divine.

«His mother» Maryam «was a woman strong and true in faith» that is, this too is the most that may be said concerning her, that she was one of those who are strong and true in faith (şiddeeq), those who are the highest of humanity in status after the Prophets. The status of şiddeeq is one of beneficial knowledge that leads to certainty of faith and righteous deeds. This is proof that Maryam was not a prophetess; rather the most that may be said of her is that she attained the level of being a *şiddeeqah*, and that is sufficient virtue and honour.

Similarly, there was no prophetess among women, because Allah (ﷻ) has ordained that prophethood should be bestowed only upon the more perfect of the two genders, namely men, as He says:

«We did not send before you any but men to whom We gave revelation...» (Yoosuf 12: 109)

As 'Eesâ (ﷺ) was like the Prophets and Messengers who came before him, and his mother was a şiddeeqah, why did the Christians take them as two gods besides Allah?

«and they both ate food» – this clearly indicates that they were weak slaves who needed the same as all other children of Adam, namely food and drink. If they had been gods, they would have had no need of food and drink, or anything else, because the true God is the One Who is independent of means, praiseworthy.

Having established this proof, Allah (ﷻ) says: «See how We make Our signs clear to them», signs which highlight the truth and establish certainty. Yet despite that it is of no use to them; rather they persist

in their sin, lies and fabrications. This is stubborn wrongdoing on their part.



﴿قُلْ أَعْبُدُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُم ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧٦)

5:76. Say: Do you worship, besides Allah, that which has no power either to harm or benefit you, when it is Allah [alone] Who is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing?

﴿Say﴾ to them, O Messenger

﴿Do you worship, besides Allah﴾, among created beings who are dependent and needy

﴿that which has no power either to harm or benefit you﴾, and you ignore the only One Who has the power to harm or benefit, to give or withhold?

﴿when it is Allah [alone] Who is the All-Hearing﴾, who hears all voices

﴿All-Knowing﴾ who knows all things, outward and inward, unseen and seen, past and future. The Perfect One (ﷻ) Who possesses these attributes is the only One Who is deserving of all kinds of worship and devotion.



﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ﴾ (٧٦) لُعَبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا

عَصُوا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوا هُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧٧-٨١)

- 5:77. Say: O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds of truth in your religion, nor follow the desires of people who went astray before, led many others astray and [themselves] strayed from the straight path.
- 5:78. Those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel were cursed on the lips of Dâwood and 'Eesâ ibn Maryam; that was because of their disobedience and persistence in transgression.
- 5:79. They would not forbid one another to do any of the evil deeds they did. Wretched indeed were their deeds.
- 5:80. You see many of them taking those who disbelieve as allies.²⁸ Wretched indeed is that which they themselves have sent on before them, for they have incurred the wrath of Allah and in torment they will abide forever.
- 5:81. If they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet and in what has been sent down to him, they would never have taken them as allies, but most of them are rebellious evildoers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ): «Say: O People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds of truth in your religion» that is, do not overstep the mark and go beyond the bounds of truth to falsehood, such as their views concerning the Messiah that are mentioned above,

²⁸ The word *awliya'*, translated here as "allies", may also mean protectors, supporters, close friends, and so on.

or their exaggeration about some of their religious leaders, following ﴿the desires of people who went astray before﴾ and ﴿led many others astray﴾ by calling them to the religion that they were following ﴿and [themselves] strayed from the straight path﴾ that is, the path of truth. Thus they combined going astray themselves with leading other people astray. This refers to the leaders of misguidance; Allah warns against them and against following their whims and desires that lead to doom, or their misleading views.

Then Allah says: ﴿Those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel were cursed﴾ that is, they were expelled and cast far away from the mercy of Allah ﴿on the lips of Dâwood and 'Eesâ ibn Maryam﴾ that is, by means of their testimony and affirmation that proof was established but they (the disbelievers) stubbornly rejected it ﴿that﴾ namely that disbelief and curse ﴿was because of their disobedience and persistence in transgression﴾ that is, they disobeyed Allah and they transgressed against the slaves of Allah, and that became the cause of their disbelief and being far from the mercy of Allah, because sins and wrongdoing have consequences.

Among the sins that brought upon them exemplary punishments was the fact that ﴿They would not forbid one another to do any of the evil deeds they did﴾. In other words, they used to do evil deeds, and they did not tell one another not to do that. Thus those who directly committed the evil actions and others, who kept quiet and did not speak out against evil when they were able to do so, became partners in sin.

That was indicative of their carelessness with regard to the command of Allah, and that the matter of disobedience to Allah was something insignificant to them. If they had had any respect for their Lord, they would have been careful lest His sacred limits be transgressed and they would have become angry at that which incurs

His anger. Keeping quiet when one is able to speak out against evil results in punishment, because it has grave consequences, such as the following:

- Merely keeping quiet is an act of sin in itself, even if one is not directly involved in the sin. Just as it is essential to avoid sin, it is also essential to denounce the one who does sinful acts.
- As mentioned above, it is indicative of carelessness with regard to sin and of a lack of concern about committing sin.
- It makes sinners audacious and leads to an increase in sinful actions, if people are not deterred from sin. Thus evil increases, leading to greater trouble in both religious and worldly affairs, as the evildoers gain the upper hand, after which good people become too weak to resist evil people, to the extent that they become unable to do what they used to do before.
- When evil is not denounced, knowledge diminishes and ignorance prevails, because when sin is committed repeatedly by many people, and is not denounced by people of religious commitment and knowledge, some people may no longer see it as sin and it may be regarded by the ignorant as a good act of worship. What evil can be greater than regarding as permissible that which Allah has forbidden, turning facts upside-down in people's minds and seeing falsehood as truth?
- Keeping quiet about sin may lead to sin becoming fair-seeming in people's minds, thus they will follow one another's examples, because man is prone to following the example of his peers.

Because keeping quiet about evil is such a serious matter, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He cursed the disbelievers among the Israelites for their sin and transgression, among which He singled out a particularly grave offence: ﴿Wretched indeed were their deeds. You see many of them taking those who disbelieve as allies﴾, loving them, taking them as friends and giving them help and support.

«Wretched indeed is that which they themselves have sent on before them». This is a losing deal, because of which they incur the wrath of Allah, and thus the wrath of all things, and eternal punishment. They have wronged themselves, for they have brought this bad fate upon themselves, which causes them to miss out on eternal bliss.

«If they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet and in what has been sent down to him, they would never have taken them as allies». Faith in Allah and belief in the Prophet (ﷺ) and that which has been sent down to him requires the individual to take as allies his Lord and His allies, and to oppose those who disbelieve in Him, oppose Him and disobey Him. Taking Allah as one's ally and believing in Him dictates that one must not take the enemies of Allah as one's allies. These people failed to meet this condition.

«but most of them are rebellious evildoers» that is, they do not obey Allah or believe in Him or His Prophet (ﷺ). Part of their rebellious evildoing is that they take as allies the enemies of Allah.



Glossary of Islamic Terms*



<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i>)	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>ahl adh-dhimmah</i>	أهل الذِّمَّة	non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state
<i>ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah</i>	أهل السُّنَّة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
<i>Ameer al-Mu'mineen</i>	أمير المؤمنين	'Leader of the Believers'
angel	ملاك	A being made of light who is totally obedient to Allah and has no free will. Allah has assigned some angels specific tasks, like those who record our good and bad deeds, the Angel of Death, the guardians of hell, etc.
' <i>Arafah</i> (pl. ' <i>Arafât</i>)	عَرَفَة، عَرَافَات	the plain outside of Makkah where pilgrims gather at the climax of the Hajj; it is actually made up of a chain of hills, so the plural form is sometimes used

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

'awrah	عَوْرَة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face
banu (or bani)	بَنُو، بَنِي	<i>lit.</i> 'children (of)'; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
barzakh	بَرْزَخ	an intermediate state between death and the Day of Resurrection; it is also said to be a 'place' where the souls of the deceased will remain until the blowing of the trumpet
Dajjâl	الدَّجَّال	the antichrist (anti-Christ); in Islamic teachings, he is a false messiah who will deceive the people and cause harm to humankind until he is killed by Jesus (ﷺ)
<u>dhihâr</u>	ظِهَار	<u>Dhihâr</u> is the unlawful act of saying to one's spouse: "You are as impermissible for me [to enjoy intimately] as my mother" – and similar statements.
dhikr Allâh	ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ	remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him
dinar (deenâr)	دِينَار	originally, a gold coin; a unit of currency
dirham	دِرْهَم	originally, a silver coin; a unit of currency
du'â'	دُعَاء	supplication; invocation

Eid ('eed)	عيد	<i>lit.</i> 'festival': one of the two annual Islamic celebrations, one at the end of Ramadan and the other at the culmination of the Hajj
<i>fajr</i>	الفجر	dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time
fatwa (<i>fatwah</i>)	فتوى	religious decision or decree
<i>fay'</i>	الغنيء	spoils of war that are gained by the Muslims without fighting the disbelievers
<i>fiqh</i>	فقه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
<i>fiṭrah</i>	فطرة	the natural inclination (of humans) instilled by Allah
<i>fuqahā'</i>	فقهاء	<i>sing. faqeeh</i> ; jurists
<i>ghusl</i>	غُسل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
hadith (<i>ḥadeeth</i>)	حديث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
<i>ḥaneef</i>	حنيف	one who believes as Prophet Ibrâheem believed, i.e., a monotheist, although he or she may not yet have heard of or accepted Islam
Haram	حَرَم	the sacred area surrounding and including the Kaaba in Makkah; any inviolable or holy area

<i>haram (ḥarām)</i>	حرام	forbidden according to Islamic law
<i>ḥadd (pl. ḥudood)</i>	حدّ	specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication
Iblees	إبليس	another name for Satan in Arabic
'iddah	عِدَّة	the waiting period after a woman is widowed or divorced, during which she is not allowed to remarry, in order to ascertain whether or not she is pregnant with the child of her late or ex-husband
<i>iḥrām</i>	إِحْرَام	the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state
<i>iḥsān</i>	إِحْسَان	goodness, perfection, excellence; to worship Allah as if you see Him knowing that even if you do not see Him, He sees you
<i>in shā' Allāh</i>	إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ	God willing
<i>isnād</i>	إِسْنَاد	the chain of narration through which a hadith can be traced back to the Prophet (ﷺ)
<i>istikhārah</i>	اسْتِخَارَة	a prayer by which one seeks guidance from Allah before making a decision
<i>jāhili</i>	جَاهِلِيّ	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorant'; belonging to the period of ignorance that preceded Islam

<i>jāhiliyah</i>	جَاهِلِيَّة	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
<i>jamrah</i> (pl. <i>jamarât</i>)	جَمْرَة	<i>lit.</i> 'stones'; one of the stone structures at which pilgrims throw pebbles during the Hajj, emulating the Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) when he threw stones at the devil
Jibreel	جِبْرِيل	the Arabic name for Gabriel (ﷺ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (ﷻ) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
<i>jihād</i> (<i>jihād</i>)	جِهَاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)
<i>jinn</i> (plural of <i>jinni</i>)	جِنّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>jizyah</i>	جِزْيَة	a tax levied on the People of the Scriptures when they are under the protection of a Muslim government; it is in lieu of the alms tax paid by Muslims

Jumu'ah	جُمُعَة	Friday; <i>also</i> , the midday congregational prayer on that day
juz' (pl. <i>ajzâ'</i>)	جُزْء	a section of the Qur'an equal to one-thirtieth of the text
Kaaba (<i>Ka'bah</i>)	الكَعْبَة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, which Muslims face when they pray
khul'	خُلْع	divorce initiated by the wife
khushoo'	خُشُوع	humility, devotion, and sincerity
khutbah	خُطْبَة	sermon or speech; specifically, the sermon given during the Friday congregational prayer
al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh	اللَّوْحُ المَحْفُوظ	the Preserved Tablet in heaven on which Allah's words and decrees are written
madhy	مَذْي	the prostatic secretion excreted by one when thinking of sex or during foreplay
maghrib	مَغْرِب	sunset; the obligatory prayer at that time
maḥram	مَحْرَم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
maniy	مَنِي	semen
Maqâm Ibrâheem	مَقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ	the Station of Abraham (Ibrâheem) next to the Kaaba

<i>Muhājīroon</i> (or <i>Muhājireen</i>)	مهاجرون	<i>lit.</i> 'emigrants' of any kind; used in Islamic discourse to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, specifically the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
<i>mustahabb</i>	مُسْتَحَب	<i>lit.</i> 'encouraged'; righteous deeds that are not obligatory but encouraged in the religious texts; the one who does them will be rewarded, but the one who does not do them does not incur sin and will not be punished.
<i>mutawātir</i>	مُتَوَاتِر	a category of hadith: a narration that is related by so many upright and trustworthy narrators at each level that it would have been impossible for them to have agreed on a lie
<i>nafs</i>	نَفْس	inner soul or self
Quraysh	قُرَيْش	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
<i>rak'ah</i> (pl. <i>raka'ât</i>)	رَكْعَة	a unit of the formal prayer (<i>ṣalâh</i>)
Ramadan (<i>Ramaḍân</i>)	رمضان	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting and the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
<i>ribâ</i>	رِبَا	usury; charging interest on debt

<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	صحابه	Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)
<i>ṣaḥeeḥ</i>	صحيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
<i>sa'iy</i>	سعي	one of the rites of Hajj; the pilgrim walks seven times between the hills of Ṣafā and Marwah, re-enacting Hajar's search for water for her baby Ismā'eel
<i>salām</i>	السلام	<i>lit.</i> 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
<i>seerah</i>	سيرة	biography, <i>esp.</i> of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
<i>shar'i</i>	شرعي	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
Sharia (<i>sharee'ah</i>)	شريعة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
Shayṭān	شيطان	Satan
<i>soorah</i> or <i>soorat</i>	سورة	chapter of the Qur'an
Sunnah	سنة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
<i>tafseer</i>	تفسير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (<i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)
<i>tahajjud</i>	تهجد	voluntary night prayer offered between 'ishā' and <i>fajr</i>

<i>tahleel</i>	تَهْلِيل	the act of saying <i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i> (there is none worthy of worship other than Allah)
<i>tahmeed</i>	تَحْمِيد	the act of saying <i>Alḥamdulillâh</i> (all praises and thanks are for Allah)
<i>takbeer</i>	تَكْبِير	the act of saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> (Allah is the Greatest)
<i>ṭalâq</i>	طَلَاق	divorce
<i>taqwâ</i>	التَّقْوَى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
<i>tasbeeh</i>	تَسْبِيح	the recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying <i>subḥân Allâh</i> (glory be to Allah)
<i>tawḥeed</i>	التَّوْحِيد	the oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
Ummah	أُمَّة	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
'umrah	عُمْرَة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
unseen	خَفِي	a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
<i>wali</i>	وَلِي	friend and helper (of Allah)

<i>zakât</i> (or <i>zakâh</i>)	زكاة	obligatory charity: an ‘alms tax’ on wealth that is paid by Muslims and to be distributed to others who qualify as recipients
<i>zinâ</i>	زنا	fornication or adultery; unlawful sexual intercourse



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